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# Korikori Kōrero: a mobile method of inquiry for moving Māori women and their knowledges

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**ABSTRACT**

This article outlines the use of a novel research method, *Korikori Kōrero*, with a group of physically active Māori women. The research aimed to identify common traits or ways of knowing and being, by engaging with Māori women in their chosen physical activities and preferred environments. Korikori Kōrero draws from both Indigenous and Euro-Western research methodologies to ultimately bring the research relationship and associated power dynamic into balance. Māori women have experienced an exaggerated imbalance of power resulting from the patriarchal dominance of colonisation, and their contemporary realities often reflect this. However, it was the intention of this research and method, to privilege the stories of Māori women, successful in navigating contemporary realities – through physical activity, a known protective health behaviour. This article will share the rationale behind this novel mobile method; how it was implemented; and its relevance in generating an understanding of physically active Māori women.

**Glossary of Māori words:** mātauranga: Māori knowledges, processes of learning; kanohi kitea: the seen face; whakapapa: genealogy and background; whakawhanaungatanga: connectedness and building relationships; wānanga: gathering or a meeting where there is an exchange of knowledge; Hinetuākiri, Hineuku, and Papatūānuku: Māori feminine deities connected to the earth (gravel, clay, earth); hongi: Māori greeting/gesture demonstrated by pressing noses and sharing breath; whanaungatanga: established connections/relationships; wahine/wāhine: woman/women; mana: authority; tikanga: cultural practices; mihi: introductions, acknowledgements; whanau: immediate and extended family; toa: relates to strength, skillfullness; teina: younger sibling or less experienced; tuakana: older sibling or more experienced; Whakataka te hau ki te uru, whakataka te hau ki te tonga: the opening lines of a popular karakia, translates to: Cease oh winds of the west and of the south; karakia: incantation, prayer, ritual chant; te taiao: the natural environment; maunga: mountain; korikori tinana ā tinana: physical activity in person.

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## Introduction

Research with Māori has often contributed to a disempowering discourse of deficit. The power imbalance in a research relationship can be exaggerated for Māori women who experience a more imbalanced dynamic as a consequence of the patriarchal dominance of colonisation (Smith 2006; Walter and Suina 2019). Research methods and those who conduct them bring their own unique biases, perspectives, and intentions. Indigenous peoples, specifically Māori have often been the target of research whose biases, perspectives, and intentions have reflected poorly on Māori and indeed have reflected Māori poorly. The ongoing process of colonisation and a history of being researched *on* instead of *with* has contributed to a degree of mistrust and uncertainty towards research, by some Māori (Reid et al. 2019; Walter and Andersen 2013). Fortunately, those tired of approaches that have 'been used to legitimize and advance the political and social agendas of the colonizer', can now engage with an established body of knowledge demonstrating the role of Māori or Indigenous methodologies (Smith 1999; Smith et al. 2016). Such methodologies and methods strive to ensure a culturally safe dynamic between researcher and the research community, and contribute to positive outcomes for those research communities (Haitana et al. 2020).

The author of this article, who is Māori (Ngā Puhi, Te Arawa), wahine, and identifies as physically active uses her declared insider position as a way to seek a culturally safe dynamic – in the implementation of Korikori Kōrero. This article will outline the background and rationale for this novel mobile method, and in doing so, explores its relevance in generating an understanding of physically active Māori women.

### *Kaupapa Māori*

While there remains the imperative to collect and analyse quality data relating to Māori (and Indigenous Peoples), it is important that the research recognises the effect that dominant perspectives and approaches have had on them, and the inequitable outcomes as a result (Haitana et al. 2020; Reid et al. 2019). Kaupapa Māori research provides an Indigenous methodological framework immersed in mātauranga (Māori knowledges, worldviews, and practices). It was designed to guide the way research was conducted with Māori, rather than prescribe or structure it. Kaupapa Māori research encompasses and acknowledges Māori knowledges as legitimate ways of knowing that Māori have always held and practiced. It also provides space for contemporary applications of those Māori knowledges (Pihama 2012; Smith 1999; Smith et al. 2016).

Part of a Kaupapa Māori approach involves decolonising the research process by prioritising and privileging Māori perspectives and practices (Smith 1999). Māori beliefs and values that were historically seen as uncommon, unusual, abnormal, have within Kaupapa Māori, become normalised and centralised (Barnes 2000). The potential within a Kaupapa Māori approach to research allows for various methods to be employed but adapted to meet the specific question and design of the research. However, Kaupapa Māori requires that research s should be of value to Māori while also valuing their position as Māori. The research should also be useful and responsive to the needs of Māori, with the ultimate goal of being transformational for Māori (Smith 1999, 2006).

Unlike the types of research epistemologies with methods centred on the 'cultural preferences and practices of the Western world' (Bishop 1998, p. 3), Kaupapa Māori research centres the collective benefit and aspirations of Māori. Instead of being preoccupied with neutrality, objectivity, and creating distance between the researcher and participant; Kaupapa Māori validates and legitimises the values and culture of Māori, and critically analyses unequal societal power dynamics as they apply to the research space (Pihama 2012; Smith 1997).

### *Kanohi kitea*

Smith (1999) developed a list of seven Kaupapa Māori practices to guide Kaupapa Māori researchers:

(i) Aroha ki te tangata (a respect for people).
(ii) Kanohi kitea (presenting yourself to people face to face)
(iii) Titiro, whakarongo … kōrero (look, listen … speak)
(iv) Manaaki ki te tangata (generosity towards people)
(v) Kia tupato (be cautious)
(vi) Kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)
(vii) Kia mahaki (don't flaunt your knowledge)

Kanohi kitea (the seen face) is fundamental to the Kaupapa Māori approach and is arguably integral to the application of the other six. Acknowledging the values of Māori or the values of the research participant through the positioning and credibility of the researcher is essential. Unlike the concepts described earlier, where many western approaches to research seek to distance the researcher as objective or neutral, the many aspects of kanohi kitea deliberately bring the researcher face to face with the research participant or community. Concepts of kanohi kitea imply a physical presence or being present with their research community, and with that brings a sense of credibility, honesty, and integrity to the interaction (Cram 2009; Smith 1999). The researcher is not merely present in the interaction, but they are an active participant in it. They create connections through sharing whakapapa (genealogy and backgrounds). They establish relationships though whakawhanaungatanga (connectedness and building relationships), and by taking the time and energy to plan to travel, showing up, and being present, they are showing respect to the participant that they are worthy of the effort (Bishop 1999).

Kanohi kitea is described as a way that a community (or individuals) can 'use all their senses' to assess and evaluate the situation and their potential involvement (as cited in Pipi et al. 2004, p. 146). Indeed, this process can also allow the researcher to use 'all their senses' to assess and evaluate interactions to more effectively communicate or receive communication in a research relationship. This is how this article seeks to position the relevance of Korikori Kōrero, an activity-based method of inquiry. This method enabled research participants to engage in a research relationship where they too can use all their senses to gauge the degree to which they involve themselves. It also to facilitated an additional dynamic from which the researcher can themselves be *embodied* within the research relationship.

## Activity-based research methods

The concept of incorporating physical activity into the data collection or interview process is not new. The walking interview has been used in recent decades in social science (Grant et al. 2010), geography (Hodgson 2012), and health research (Butler and Derrett 2014), and it represents an emergent qualitative research method having increasing popularity in the exploration of the connection between person and place (Kinney 2017). The walking interview, as an activity-based qualitative research method, involves a researcher and research participant walking and talking, and often is interested in the participants' relationship with certain geographical areas or the specific route chosen (Evans and Jones 2011; Kinney 2017). In most cases, the research participant will determine the route. The chosen route can be representative of a routine activity – as in a Go-along interview (Burns et al. 2020). The route can serve as a mechanism for the participants' expertise or knowledge of the area – as in the Docent method (Chang 2017). The route can also be related to a particular topic of interest – as in the Participatory walking interview (Kinney 2017). Finally, the researcher and participant can merely walk and talk on a route where the route is not significant, but the act of walking facilitates the conversation, known as Bimbling (Anderson 2004).

Similar to the concept of kanohi kitea but with a more contextual or geographical relevance, the walking interview method allows an opportunity to observe a participant in their interactions on their chosen route and also with people or places they come into contact with along the way (Carpiano 2009). Butler and Derrett (2014) also noted an additional insight into relationship experiences that might have been less obvious in a sit-down interview. The inclusive nature of the walking interview provides an alternative to the power imbalance often associated with an across the table sit-down interview, while also facilitating comfort for the research participant when engaging in a familiar geographical environment (Trell and Van Hoven 2010).

Mobile methods have also been used in recent Māori research to engage in certain natural environments of interest. Naomi Simmonds and a team a wāhine (Māori women) with shared tribal connections, walked a 400-kilometre journey of a significant ancestress, Māhinaarangi, to reconnect with tribal stories and knowledge associated to certain geographical landmarks along the way. Simmonds describes the hikoi (walk) as an opportunity to learn about the practicalities of what Māhinaarangi would have done and to understand the preparation it might've required – emotional and spiritual. She notes the different experience that physically being in significant places and doing things connected to ancestors has compared to reading about them. 'I think we get something different when we are physically and spiritually in that place' (Simmonds as cited in Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi 2022, p. 1). Simmonds suggests that the relationship that they form by physically retracing ancestral journeys can also provide an opportunity to learn about ourselves.

The *Mobile Wānanga*, termed by Ihirangi Heke, describes the active engagement in an environment that facilitates environmental mātauranga. This informal method emphasises the connection between particular physical activity (walking, riding, paddling, etc); natural environment; and what can be learned from each (Heke 2019). The mobile wānanga has been utilised as a research method and teaching tool, where mātauranga is identified and understood through physical activity and natural environments.

The term 'wānanga' refers to a gathering or a meeting where there is an exchange of knowledge. It can refer to an educational institute, a discussion, traditional knowledge or the repositories that hold that knowledge – including people (Marsden and Royal 2003; Te Aka Māori Dictionary 2022). The mobile wānanga seeks to explore and apply mātauranga or pūrākau (stories) associated with ngā atua Māori or knowledge associated with different environments and the personifications attributed to them (Heke 2016).

I was able to experience my own significant, personal learning through a mobile wānanga which allowed me to contextualise a new piece of knowledge about atua and physical activity. This eventually resulted in a richer understanding anchored a particular experience, riding dirt bikes at a moto-X park. I was a novice rider which eventually resulted in my own 'kanohi ki te kanohi' (face-to-face introduction) to the three significant feminine deities related to the earth – Hinetuākiri, Hineuku, and Papatūānuku. I refer to this introduction to the atua/personifications of gravel, clay, and Mother Earth herself: as the *highspeed hongi*. The unremarkable crash cracked the visor on my helmet and caused a few gnarly scrapes, but the crash and subsequent debrief provided significant understanding around how atua can teach us about interacting with different environments through physical activity. I came to understand how atua can help to guide behaviour in different environments – shifting from clay to gravel to dirt. The experience helped to contextualise how pūrākau or culturally based stories of atua, contain instructions about behaviour, risk assessment, and information about the characteristics of natural environments. This lesson would serve as a foundation in the design and use in Korikori Kōrero as part of my eventual PhD research.

The difference that is apparent in the mobile methods employed by social scientists, geographers, and educational researchers using the walking interview, compared to those employed by Māori researchers, is the relationship with the geographic environments. Walking interviews, depending on the specific method, tend to focus on the spatial relationship between research participant and place (Jones et al. 2008). They rely on a degree of place-responsiveness to understand how participants conceptualise themselves in certain spaces. Other Māori or Indigenous methods that centre on mobility and place, often prioritise an ecological, genealogical (Heke 2019; Simmonds 2020), spiritual (Barnes et al. 2017), or even political (Taiapa et al. 2021) dynamic. The method of Korikori Kōrero, in my research was more about the interconnected relationships that wāhine had with their activity, with the chosen environment, and the influence of environment on activity. In such a context, each element (person, place, and physical activity) has an influence on each other, and each element is of interest. Although the Korikori Kōrero in my PhD research was about coming to understand aspects of the person, the person is not necessarily at the centre of the environment/physical activity dynamic but just one element within it. The activity session allowed the observation of each element and the many influences between them. Similarly, other mobile methods employed by Māori researchers used physical activity as a mechanism for engaging with mātauranga, or knowledges embedded within the environmental dynamic (Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi 2022). The aim of this paper is to introduce Korikori Kōrero as a mobile or active method of data collection that aligns with an Indigenous worldview; to present a summary of its use in my recent PhD research; and to contextualise its relevance as a mobile method that aligns with Kaupapa Māori.

## Methods

This research method was conducted as part of a PhD, completed in October 2021. An ethics application was submitted to the Auckland University of Technology Ethics Committee and ethics approval (AUTEC 18/391) was received on 5 November 2018.

### *Recruitment*

The data collection began in 2019 after the recruitment of a group of wāhine Māori who identified themselves as physically active. Participants were recruited via extended whanaungatanga (established connections/relationships), through online social media advertisements or direct invitations. Interested parties were provided further information and an opportunity to ask questions before agreeing to participate. Each wahine who agreed to participate also agreed to be named in research outputs. This waived conventional privacy; however, participants' mana (authority) was respected and each appreciated for their involvement, while protocols that valued their tikanga (cultural practices), alongside 'conventional' ethical processes were conducted (Hudson 2010). The identification of participants in published documents has been used in similar research where the intention was to provide a platform for the success of a research community. This decision also enabled wider communities to relate and connect to the names, identities, and tribal affiliations of participants (Forster et al. 2016; Wirihana 2012).

### *Data collection – Korikori Kōrero*

The data collection process began with a process of introductions (Mihi), where both the researcher and the research participant shared their whakapapa and engaged in whakawhanaungatanga. This would occur, initially via email or phone conversation, and then upon face-to-face meeting. Each of the wāhine who participated would outline their chosen activity and the place it would occur. This meant that each Korikori Kōrero / interview would be different and would require adaptive use of recording and planning. Some activity sessions were observed; on other occasions the researcher would participate in an activity prior to the interview; and finally, other sessions involved – walking and talking in a chosen environment. All interviews with the 19 wāhine who participated, were audio recorded and some activity sessions were also video recorded. The researcher would record a journal reflection at the end of each session to note any initial relevant observations. These reflections and recordings would serve as a reminder and record of an initial glimpse of each wahine and their activity and would contribute to the data analysis process.

Whichever format was used, the interview usually started with an open opportunity for wāhine to talk about their relationship with physical activity and what drew them to participate in the research. The interview aimed to be an informal (but semi-structured) conversation about each wāhine, their connection to physical activity, and traits or experiences of relevance. Wāhine would often take the opportunity to share stories about how they came to be physically active, whether through significant life events or personal decisions. The open-ended nature of that initial question allowed wāhine to reflect on their physical activeness and ultimately begin to share openly about their

active identity. What tended to happen was that wāhine would begin to answer questions before they were even asked. The opportunity to reflect on their relationship with physical activity would lead to stories related to their whānau (immediate and extended families); social relationships and behaviours; personality traits; and challenges that they faced. I would still revisit topics of interest to allow wāhine to expand or give more detail.

### Reflective journal

In this research, the reflective journal provided an opportunity to record a first impression of each participant – usually based on the activity I observed them in or participated in. The reflection would be recorded as soon as practicable after our first interaction and involved a short reflection of that interaction and a few keywords that came to mind after it. They would by no means serve as a comprehensive assessment of the person, nor would they be expected to stand alone as representations of the wāhine they were written about. The reflections merely offered an opportunity to recall how I perceived each wāhine before having asked any interview questions, if possible. However, due to the fact that some first interactions also served as the interview, those reflections were written after an interview (but always before any analysis).

### Data analysis

The combined data collected from korikori and kōrero (activity and interviews), reflective journal entries, video footage, photographs, and audio recordings (via subsequent transcripts) were analysed using a culturally adapted reflexive thematic analysis. The adapted reflexive thematic analysis aimed to identify commonalities in the traits (or ways of being and doing) these Māori women displayed, demonstrated, or discussed through korikori and kōrero. However, instead of creating themes to describe these categories, metaphorical descriptions were developed to align more with a Māori worldview. The five metaphorical categories, described as huahuatau, were developed to provide a connection to the content of conversations, while also maintaining an active element. Each metaphor is a Māori phrase or concept whose interpretation allows for a broad and potentially co-constructed meaning. Although the particular adaptation of this data analysis process is unique, reflexive thematic analysis (RTA) itself is increasingly used in psychology, sport and exercise, and other research areas (Braun and Clarke 2006; Braun et al. 2016). The intention in RTA is to be deliberate about making meaning out of the data, and viewing that meaning as bound, positioned, and situated in its own context.

The appeal of RTA is in its recognition that qualitative data analysis is about telling the stories from the data and that themes are interpreted and created by the researcher (Braun et al. 2016). This aligns well with a Māori approach where the researcher is not separated from the research and its data, and to Korikori Kōrero where I was actively engaged in the research process. Such RTA characteristics work well with aspects of a Māori worldview, including concepts of pūrākau (storytelling) and whakapapa, where structures of knowledge are intertwined in contextual stories and personal connection (Lee 2009; Roberts 2012). The development of

**Table 1.** Outline of metaphorical categories – Huahuatau.

| Huahuatau | |
|---|---|
| Ko au te taiao, ko te taiao ko au | Demonstrations of the connections and reflections that wāhine have with certain environments (natural and social) |
| Ngā taonga tuku iho | Depictions of wāhine as conduits for knowledge transmission, as avid learners, teachers, and sharers of knowledge |
| Rakanga Waewae | Describes wāhine as agile and able to move between many different spaces and roles |
| Ahuwhenua | Reflects the creativity and resourcefulness of wāhine in cultivating successful outcomes |
| Poipoia te kākano kia puāwai | Acknowledges the latent and active potential within wāhine to flourish – likened to a seed. |

Note: table contents are adapted from the finding of Heke (2021).

metaphors instead of themes or trait definitions provides a mechanism for broadening meaning rather than reducing it, and thus aligning the findings with a Māori world view. Metaphors or huahuatau provide a broad set of organising principles while also having the added potential to help shape the content into powerful reflective representations and expressions of the contributions of participants (Bishop and Glynn 1999; Marsden and Royal 2003). Huahuatau developed from this research are described briefly in Table 1.

### *Practical considerations*

There are several practical, logistical and safety concerns that need to be factored into any mobile method, especially those potentially conducted in outdoor settings. The use of walking interviews has been used with different research communities, ranging from older adults with dementia (Cook 2020), youth (Trell and Van Hoven 2010), racial minority groups (Warren 2017), and urban communities (Lauwers et al. 2021). This means that there can be considerations related to physical capability, power relations, or safety. However, the nature of my research, with self-identified physically active women, meant that any considerations of physical capacity was minimal. However, there were certain aspects of research safety that were addressed as part of a Researcher Safety Protocol, which was also required for ethics approval. This included notifying a contact of planned activities; working flexibility into the schedule; and planning for changes in weather. For outdoor interviews or those involving walking and talking, lapel microphones are a useful way to avoid excess background noise, while being a discrete way to record.

## Results

### *Activity sessions observed*

Of the 19 interviews conducted, 4 involved the researcher observing, rather than joining participants in their activity. The approach to these observations was to be an intentional and active observer. This meant that I was not merely watching these women as they participated in their respective activities, but that I was intentionally looking for the ways they conducted themselves and how they interacted with their physical and social environment. Most occasions involved the wāhine training or playing sport alongside other people. The first, Alyx, was participating in a hockey training for an women's

hockey team, in Auckland. I watched from the side-lines and then joined the team on the turf to assist with timing them for shuttle runs. I recorded a reflection of the experience that describes aspects of my observation that I may not have had if I was engaged in the activity with her.

> Speed, agility, skills training. Stick to ball – seems an extension of the self. From what I observe and understand, Alyx (and some of her teammates) take the lead. I see strategy in her movements and determination. Although I know only a few of the rules of the game, I sense she is seeing the next play or two before they happen.

In Rolleston, Christchurch, I also observed Teresa's physical activity as she participated in a morning CrossFit WOD session. She was amongst a group of about 15 other people, most of whom were fit, young men, with Teresa being the oldest of no more than three other women. This would be pertinent as I would eventually observe her demonstrating a sense of determination and grit.

> Her strength exudes from her, even apart from the impressive weights she moves. She stands strong in her space in a way that makes it clear what she intends to achieve. Her work ethic is clear, but in case you didn't notice, she kept working even after the 17-minute time cap expired and everyone else was packing up. She finishes what she starts.

Another activity I observed involved watching Angelina playing a social netball game on a Saturday morning in Kaikohe – Northland. The experience and environment brought with it a sense of nostalgia, as I recalled my own time as a young girl playing netball.

> Loudspeaker announcements, the smell of sausage sizzle wafting (or in this case nachos), children running around, women organising, whistles blowing. It felt familiar.

I met Apikera – a powerlifter – as she was warming up for her deadlift training on an early morning in a community gym in Kaitaia – Northland. I sat in the gym as a small community of people trained around me. I watched as she added weight plates to her bar, she was focussed.

> Api was grounded. She had her way. Power lifters often do. She pulled with ease but not with ego. Toa!

For each of the activity sessions I observed, I was able to immediately document written reflections and observations, video recordings, and photographs. I was able to observe or interpret details of the dynamic between person, place, and physical activity from a purposeful position. I actively observed how wāhine engaged in both the activity and the environment. These observations and interpretations would contribute to later analysis.

### *Activity sessions shared*

All the other interviews, except one, were conducted either after or during an activity that I would actively participate in. Activities ranged from dance fitness or spin classes; swimming laps at a local pool; paddling a 2-person waka ama (outrigger canoe); taking turns on a stand-up paddle board; lifting weights or going for walks in significant places. Each of these activities were either new experiences for me or took place in unfamiliar environments. I was therefore, in a position less like a conventional researcher's position and more like the teina/person being guided by a tuakana/more experienced person. Actively

engaging in the chosen activities facilitated an opportunity to not only see each wāhine 'doing and being' in their activities, but also meant that I, as the researcher, had a more sensory experience of that 'doing and being'.

As I stepped out of time and in the wrong direction, while trying to mirror the effortless movements of Auckland-based dance instructors – I could consider the actual effort it actually might require to dance while giving instructions, smile, motivate, and look graceful.

> Carnation and Summer-Love managed to warm up the room with their vibe, their smiles, and energy. I felt comfortable, despite being uncoordinated with most of the choreography. I admired their ability to make the dance moves look simple, smooth, and cool at the same time.

I was able to experience the constant rebalancing required when (trying to) stand on a paddle board in the open water. I saw the perspective that Sherilee mentioned when she paddled back to shore in Cass Bay – Christchurch, and I could see the many reasons she loved this activity as an antithesis to her former rugby league career and attraction to aggressive sports.

> She heads out for a paddle while I watch from the beach – I can see her delight from afar. She heads back towards the shore with a smile and notes how beautiful it is to turn and see the hills behind … perspective! I swim to the pontoon, and we swap places. I fight to balance on my knees – muscles tighten to stabilize … We both smile when we fall in.

I felt the wind and rain on my face as Celia and I paddled waka ama in Whangārei harbour. The conversation between us felt comfortable despite me having my back to her in the waka, and us getting caught in heavy rain for most of the journey.

> Whakataka te hau ki te uru, whakataka te hau ki te tonga … We begin our waka with a karakia. The wind is not our concern initially but the tohu in the sky leave us with no doubt that we will be experiencing more than a few splashes from a stray paddle. We both take the weather in our stride or rhythm. Either way, we appreciate the lesson offered by te taiao.

The activities that I engaged in allowed me to personally experience the movements and the environments, while also observing the wahine I was active with. I hadn't swum lengths of a pool in several years, when I met Christina for a swim at Todd Energy Aquatic Centre, on a day when the pools were packed with young children learning to swim and dive.

> Regardless, we swam. She was smooth, steady, and focussed in the water. She worked her way from warm up, to warmed up. Just steadily inward and getting it done. Swimming with Christina reminded me that I could swim …

In some situations, the wāhine I interviewed chose to take me to a significant place to walk and talk. I walked with wāhine in Redwood forests; up maunga (mountains) in the blistering heat day of the day and as dusk settled into dark; and around suburban streets. Holly was a dancer but chose to share a walk atop a maunga in Wellington. She led me down and then back up the track with confidence, I huffed and puffed as we walked and talked. My diminished fitness at 7 months pregnant was more of a hinderance than her so-called surgically corrected clubfoot.

> The sound of the wind turbine whooshing and the Wellington wind blowing on the hilltop eventually faded as we began to descend the track in the dark. Once we decide to turn our phone torches on, the sense of trepidation began to subside. Holly nimbly navigated the uneven surface, despite her so-called 'bionic ankle' …

Although not necessarily engaging in a new activity, the environments were unfamiliar to me and known to the participants. Wāhine who walked and talked with me were still displaying aspects of their active identities, albeit in a less activity-specific way. I would note; however, that I was not able to identify or observe specific aspects of these women's physicality that I was able to with women who were doing their favoured activities.

## *Reflections*

The diverse experiences of physical activity sessions, of people, and of the places they shared meant that although interviews involved korikori and kōrero, they were vastly different from one another. The novel nature of the Korikori Kōrero method meant that I would take learnings from earlier experiences with wāhine and apply them to those I interviewed later. Much of the learning related to the interview structure and implementation rather than the actual active component. The flow of the interviews was slightly more rigid and robotic in the initial few interviews but became more fluid and natural towards the later interviews. This was possibly a reflection of my personality as the researcher rather than aspects of the research method. Nevertheless, each of these unique, diverse, and enlightening experiences was an opportunity for each wahine to express active aspects of their identity, through movement, through kōrero, and through an interaction with their environment.

However, there was one wāhine I interviewed who was not able to make time to share an activity session with me. I met her at her place of work, and I interviewed her across a boardroom table in a meeting room. Although, she shared stories of her activity, whānau, and personal experiences, the interview experience was vastly different from those whom I was able to share activity with. After the interview, I jotted in my reflective journal just as I did with other wāhine; however, I did reflect on a sense of distance and formality in the interview that was not necessarily experienced after (or during) the activity sessions. I chose to still include Vania's interview even though it was not strictly conducted using Korikori Kōrero as a method. She did manage to display aspects of herself, outside of interview questions, when someone interrupted us wanting to use the meeting room earlier than they had booked it.

> … I think I get a sense of Vania's physical personality anyway … I wouldn't want to be standing in her way when she was a second-rower, nor would I cross her in a board room.

Despite my noted reflection, the absence of a shared active experience between Vania and me was apparent in the interview dynamic. Emphasised by the office environment where it took place, the interview felt more formal than others; had a sense of urgency; and lacked the sense of relatedness established with the shared activity with others.

Kusenbach (2003) describes the benefit of the mobile method of go-alongs, as being able to capture habitual connections that are sometimes hidden or not noticed. Referring to place and environment, the paper reasons that such an argument can be made for specific activities within place too. Although with walking interviews the emphasis is

often on spatial relationships with surrounding environments, their ability to access the knowledge and attitudes of interviewees is pertinent. Korikori Kōrero; however, is more concerned with how aspects of the movement (korikori) can uncover a person's knowledge and attitudes (or in this case aspects of personality and physicality). Within that dynamic, the person; their physical activity; and the place they practice it becomes a dynamic that displays wāhine ways of being and doing. Just as walking is considered to be a more intimate means by which to engage with place, offering insights into person and place (Evans and Jones 2011; Solnit 2001), Korikori Kōrero offers an additional dimension to the way researchers can establish a sense of connection with the people they are interviewing, while coming to understanding the relevance of the environment it takes place in.

One of the initial reasons for utilising an active component with wāhine being interviewed, was to establish a sense of rapport and to 'break the ice'. Engaging in a shared activity intended to highlight a shared space between researcher and research participant. As a self-identifying physically active wahine Māori myself, I saw an opportunity for researcher and research participant to identify with each other; to communicate in a language of physical activity; and to engage in relationship building that would establish a sense of comfort for the interview process.

The Korikori Kōrero process was equally helpful for me, an introverted personality, as it was for wāhine who had decided to share aspects of their personal experiences with a relative stranger. Kanohi ki te kanohi (face to face) or korikori tinana ā tinana (physical activity in person) allows the research community to see that the researcher is genuine and open to showing themselves to be engaged in the process. Being seen – kanohi kitea – in this case is less about presence and more about essence. It demonstrates that the researcher is bringing themself into the relationship and not merely expecting the research participant to demonstrate or describe aspects of themselves alone. It recognises the space that we both occupy in the research relationship (Bishop 1999).

Moles (2008) describes the notion of the Thirdspace which allows the researcher to engage 'critically with theoretical issues, while simultaneously being that space where the debate occurs. It is a place of enunciation, where new identities can be forged and marginalised voices can speak' (p. 32). bell hooks (1990) contributes her sentiment to the idea of such a shared space being one that is a site of resistance against colonial constructs. She describes it as a

> radical space of my marginality … A message from that space in the margin that is a site of creativity and power, that inclusive space where we recover ourselves, where we move in solidarity to erase the category colonized/ colonizer. Marginality as a site of resistance. Enter that space. Let us meet there. (p. 152)

The marginal space or thirdspace described by other authors is like the space created when researcher and research participant share in Korikori Kōrero. It attempts to even out conventional power dynamics; bring the researcher into the research frame; and presents the research participant as the expert and researcher as the learner. Arguably, a Korikori Kōrero space is a kaupapa Māori space, where the realities of research participants are acknowledged, prioritised, and normalised (Barnes 2000; Bishop 1999).

In these spaces, I looked and felt like an uncoordinated fool as I tried to learn basic dance steps. I was red faced and sweaty in fitness classes I was ill-prepared for. And I

tried unconvincingly to disguise my breathlessness as I walked and talked with wāhine in a range of scenic places around Aotearoa. I always intended on experiencing and observing as much of the physical that these women were willing to share with me. I believe it translated to an embodied experience; a more genuine experience; and one that demonstrated physical activity as an ideal metaphorical vehicle for knowledge transmission.

## Conclusion

This research was initially about understanding the preferred or proficient physical activity behaviours of Māori women but what this research method ultimately showed was how to conceptualise physical activity as a tool to come to know physically active Māori women. The idea was to trace the whakapapa of physical activities to understand how wāhine are successful in navigating active lifestyles. But instead, physical activity became an expression of identity and a vehicle for knowledge. Physical activity was how wāhine displayed creativity and resourcefulness. It was how they moved between spaces and kept balance. It was how they realised their potential and how they came to appreciate what their bodies could do. Physical activity, through Korikori Kōrero was a language spoken between active wāhine for the purpose of creating and interpreting mātauranga wahine (Māori women's knowledges). In this way, there is definite potential for Korikori Kōrero to translate knowledges of and alongside different research communities.

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