

He Awa Whiria: Braiding the Knowledge Streams in Research, Policy and Practice.

Edited by Angus Macfarlane, Melissa Derby and Sonja Macfarlane.

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Reviewed by Mere Berryman.

The metaphor *He Awa Whiria* in the title, clearly signals that this is a book about bringing different perspectives together into new, stronger and mutually interconnected wholes. Reflecting on the life work of the lead editor Professor Angus Macfarlane the idea of bringing together, often complex ideas into new coherent wholes has been a hallmark of his stellar career in psychology, education and research. It might be said that the co-editors, Doctor Melissa Derby and Associate Professor Sonja Macfarlane, today, each outstanding scholars in their own right, have both benefitted from Professor Macfarlane's in-depth knowledge and vision in these fields. Collectively, the editors and the authors of the 12 related chapters bring together a breadth of New Zealand research expertise and scholarship, in both practical yet well theorised ways, that has seldom been matched.

Angus opens the book with a short prologue in which he provides the reader with insights to the professional challenges he faced, by being a researcher of Māori descent, working in western dominated spaces. Rather than compromising his beliefs, Angus embraces many of the challenges he faced and learns from them. Through the critical questions he sets himself Angus continued to lean into the new learning to develop solutions rather than be overcome by the problems. He suggests that 'He Awa Whiria serves as a reminder that, in the research communities of New Zealand and beyond, there is a need to rethink the meanings and practices associated with the changing face of research conventions' (p. 18). Thus, positioning this need to rethink as both a privilege (we stand to learn) and a challenge (some things might need to change) for readers of this book.

As we learn in chapter one, although blended models and a braided river model have been presented earlier, the research context in which the model of He Awa Whiria was first implemented in practice is the next stepping stone of this book. This conduct-problems project provides a compelling case of He Awa Whiria being able to braid together different epistemologies and knowledge streams without having to compromise the unique qualities that each brings to the shared endeavour. We read, that this requires maintaining power relations within which the mana of all parties is maintained. While this involves the complexity of relational engagements between researcher and participants, this book is also about the relational engagement between Māori and Pākehā.

Based on a close, longstanding personal and professional relationship that must have spanned at least three decades, Māori and Pākehā relationships are further explored and exemplified as another stepping stone in this book. While western training has tended to separate personal and professional relationships, Angus and Emeritus Professor Ted Glynn have found that personal and professional boundaries must be understood and accommodated by non-Māori if they are seeking to work collaboratively with Māori. When this happens, research can be dynamic, expansive and more far reaching.

The chapters that follow, each work within this model and reflect these relational interactions in praxis. Chapters three to eleven implement He Awa Whiria through different research projects whilst bringing the authors own reflexive and theoretical positioning about its application to the fore. Research projects range from early literacy, whānau and their wellbeing,

non-Māori researchers incorporating both western and mātauranga Māori into their research, mātauranga Māori and volcanology resources for schools, psychology, enhancing cultural diversity, assessing change in communities and working in doctoral research. From their roles in these projects, authors are in unique positions to describe in depth how their authentic life experiences came together to benefit both the people with whom they worked and the outcomes of their projects. Chapters synthesise often complex evidence and theoretical understandings as this model has been applied within these often quite diverse projects. Collectively, the chapters also provide a rich range of models and diagrams to exemplify these ways of working and to help us the reader, understand these processes whilst enticing us forward to step safely into and across this Awa.

If this was as far as this book proceeded, we, the reader, would have already gained much. However, the final chapter, not only about Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi, but for researchers both Tangata Whenua and Tangata Tiriti, provides a three-step method, He Rangahau Whiria, for undertaking research that is Treaty centred. This method is followed by a theory of change built on relationality and connectedness; an open dialogue from both authors about how crossing boundaries or making boundaries permeable can indeed be achieved. This chapter concludes by reminding us about two overarching barriers to equity which it seems we are in the midst of in Aotearoa at the present – if you gain something then what have I lost, and deficit thinking about who is benefitting, and who deserves to benefit. Disrupting intergenerational, meritocratic thinking such as this is indeed needed.

In the epilogue, the final voices, from the remaining editors, provide a succinct and compelling invitation to be inspired by this creation of new thinking, visual representations and authentic collaborations. I would certainly support their invitation. In reading this book I was reminded of Sir Apirana Ngata's advice about the gathering of new knowledge by metaphorically casting one's net at the interface of te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā. He Awa Whiria provides the stepping stones for doing this work respectfully, collaboratively and together. It does this by providing a compelling set of well researched examples and contexts from which we as a nation can all benefit. It is a generous and powerful legacy, underpinned by a scholar who in his lifetime has taught us much. From this final koha, we can continue to take our learning from him, and from these dedicated researchers and inspiring scholars, into the future.

Te Arawa Whenua, Te Arawa Tangata

I rū te whenua o tō koutou maunga o Tarawera i ngā tau kua pahure.

E rū ana anō tō koutou whenua nā te hingangatanga o tō koutou Tōtara Haemata
a Angus Hikairo Macfarlane.

Hikairo Tangata, Hikairo Anga Rangahau

Moe mai rā, Okioki mai rā.