

# Pathways to the Past: Effective Pedagogies for Māori and Pasifika Students in the Historical Disciplines

## TLRI grant holders:

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**Team members:** Hinekura Lisa Smith (AI); Dr. Sean Sturm (AI)

**Project start date:** 1 January, 2018

**Project finish date:** 31 December, 2019

## Project Description:

History studies promote vital skills for indigenous students, allowing them to see history as open to their knowledge, critique and ownership. So why do so few Māori and Pasifika students enrol in history-based courses at university, and why are their pass rates typically low? We propose that choosing appropriate pedagogies is crucial. We employ Kaupapa Māori and Pasifika methodology to better understand Māori and Pasifika students' characteristic ways of knowing and learning in the historical disciplines. This will enable us to develop effective face-to-face and online pedagogies to foster their historical literacy and improve their educational outcomes in these disciplines.

## Aims:

- 1) To understand what historical literacy means in Aotearoa/New Zealand, for first-year Māori and Pasifika students;
- 2) To understand how historical literacy should be taught in Aotearoa/New Zealand today;
- 3) To implement and assess pedagogies that Māori and Pasifika students find effective for learning historical literacy;
- 4) To provide guidelines for teaching historical literacy at tertiary level, especially in those historical disciplines in which Māori and Pasifika students have achieved less well;
- 5) To enhance the teaching and research capabilities of teachers in the historical disciplines at the University of Auckland and beyond especially regarding the use of indigenous methodologies.

## Why is this research important?

Drawing on Māori and Pasifika student views, this project re-thinks 'historical literacy' from a more culturally aware standpoint. We synthesise new knowledge from cross-disciplinary enquiry, and thereby open up history studies to a more diverse group of learners. We build on knowledge of best practices in teaching Māori and Pasifika with a view to better engaging and retaining these students in the historical disciplines. And we foster critical conversations about history pedagogies across the disciplines and levels, which will lead to curriculum review at a fundamental level, and promote a culture of knowledge sharing among history educators in Aotearoa/New Zealand and internationally.

## What we plan to do:

In *Phase 1* we ask second-year Māori and Pasifika university students how they define 'historical literacy', and which pedagogical practices they consider central to promoting historical literacy. *Phase 2* involves designing and carrying out teaching interventions at the first-year level, based on the outcomes of Phase 1. A key outcome of this phase is a seminar series for secondary and tertiary teachers in historical disciplines, with a special emphasis on engaging and retaining Māori and Pasifika students. *Phase 3* involves a *hui* (gathering) to critique and disseminate our new knowledge of and culturally-informed approach to historical literacy, and the new understanding of historical literacy pedagogies. We explore how these might be applied more broadly, in other disciplines and at other levels. We further disseminate our results by means of *pūrākau* (collaborative stories), publishing these in a series of articles that convey the experience and expertise of selected tertiary teachers in the historical disciplines who have succeeded in improving outcomes for Māori and Pasifika learners.

## Our partners:

Educator-researchers involved in this project are historians from the University of Auckland from Classics, English, History and Music. Our advisory group comprises teachers from the tertiary and secondary sectors in historical disciplines, who have a high intake of Māori and Pasifika students; Dr. David Fa'avae (University of the South Pacific), who specialises in Pasifika methodology; and Dr. Aaron Wilson (University of Auckland), who specialises in improving student literacy.



**Team member photos:** Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki, Nancy November

## Contact details

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