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It's about me! My approach to autoethnography

"auto = self;
ethno = culture;
graphy = research" (Emerald & Carpenter, 2017, p. 28).

Autoethnography is about me as the writer and researcher exploring my lived experiences (Ballard, 2009; Ritchie et al., 2013) as a form of storytelling (Jones, 2003). It is a genre of writing that "shows struggle, passion, [and] embodied life" (Ellis & Bochner, 2006, p. 433) and provides "highly personalised accounts that draw upon the experience of the author/researcher" (Sparkes, 2000, p. 21). For Emerald and Carpenter (2017):

> Autoethnography asserts that when we publicly story our experiences, they transcend the private and the personal and assume political import. It is a particular research method that connects the personal to the political, social and cultural in captivating, stirring and most importantly, insightful ways that move us to action (p. 27).

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Autoethnography is "…exploring the cultural/social/political through deep reflection on the personal. The pivotal next step, though, is looking out, from the personal to the cultural, gaining research insight and stimulating some form of transformative action" (Emerald & Carpenter, 2017, p. 28). For Indigenous peoples, storytelling is an essential form of communication (King, 2005) and knowledge transmission (Cuthers, 2019; Jackson, 2007; Rangiwai, 2018d, 2018q, 2021b; Rose, 2000) that has been identified as a powerful instrument in Indigenous research (Swadener & Mutua, 2008).

Autoethnography develops "from the inside of the author to an outward expression, while working to take the readers inside themselves and ultimately out again" (Jones, 2003, p. 115). Whitinui (2014) opines: "Grounded within a resistance-based discourse, indigenous autoethnography aims to address issues of social justice and to develop social change by engaging indigenous researchers in rediscovering their own voices as "culturally liberating human-beings"" (Whitinui, 2014, p. 456). I have developed an autoethnographic approach, as a means of reclaiming and expressing my Indigenous voice, visibility, and vision (Battiste, 2000; Smith, 2005, Whitinui, 2014), based on the concepts of mōhiotanga, mātauranga, and māramatanga. Although the framework for this approach to autoethnography is presented formally for the first time here in this paper, I have used this approach in an informal way for a number of years (Enari & Rangiwai, 2021; Haurua & Rangiwai, 2020; Rangiwai, 2011a, 2011b, 2012, 2017a, 2017b, 2017c, 2018a, 2018b, 2018c, 2018d, 2018e, 2018f, 2018g, 2018h, 2018i, 2018j, 2018k, 2018l, 2018m,

2018n, 2018o, 2018p, 2018q, 2018r, 2018s, 2018t, 2018u, 2018v, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2019d, 2019e, 2020a, 2020b, 2020c, 2020d, 2020e, 2020f; 2021a, 2021b, 2021c; Rangiwai & Sciascia, 2021; Rangiwai et al., 2019; Rangiwai et al., 2020a, 2020b; Rangiwai et al., 2021).
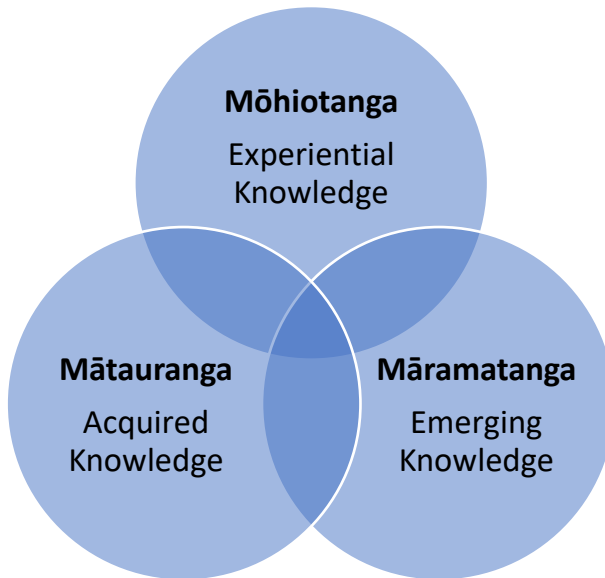

Figure 1: Mōhiotanga, Mātauranga and Māramatanga

Mōhiotanga describes knowledge, knowing, understanding, intelligence, awareness, insight, and perception (Moorfield, 2011). Mātauranga describes knowledge, wisdom, and understanding, and māramatanga describes enlightenment, insight, understanding, light, meaning, significance, and brainwave (Moorfield, 2011). In this framework, I define mōhiotanga as experiential knowledge,

mātauranga as acquired knowledge, and māramatanga as emerging knowledge.

Through the interaction of mōhiotanga, mātauranga, a Māori researcher may move into a phase of māramatanga where new and emerging knowledge is revealed or constructed. This approach, therefore, allows Māori to write their stories in ways that include and reflect upon lived experiences, backed up by acquired knowledge from the literature and elsewhere, to discover or create new knowledge. Of course, learning is never-ending, which means that the cycle of mōhiotanga, mātauranga, and māramatanga, is continuous.

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