"It is a superpower!" Being Māori enhances employability

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Understanding employability for Māori, the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand (NZ), is an under researched area. The dominant Western culture, structures and practices in university and industries within NZ have obscured Māori presence and limited Māori student's expression of their own cultural identity. The current employment environment in NZ is starting to appreciate and recognize the contribution of Māori values and principles in the workplace. The demand for Maori employees competent in tikanga (Māori protocols) and Te Reo (Māori language, one of three official languages of NZ) is on the rise. We highlight the need to explore ways to change Higher Education and work-integrated learning (WIL) to better enable and encourage students to explore their cultural identity and add value into the workplace by bringing their 'whole selves' and their 'superpower'. This study adopted a case study methodology to examine employability from a Māori perspective.

Keywords: Indigenous, Maori, employability, work-integrated learning, cultural identity, case study methodology

Graduate employability is deemed to be an important outcome for higher education institutions (Jackson, 2015). The development of attributes, capacities and skills enhancing employability are typically situated within university WIL programs where students prepare to enter a complex and dynamic world of work, before embarking on future undefined careers (Martin & Rees, 2019). However, while there is extensive research exploring employability in the context of work-integrated learning (WIL), this paper focuses on exploring employability from a Māori (Indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand) perspective, an under researched area. A specific objective of the research was to examine whether employability is culturally influenced. If so, then WIL programs could be improved for indigenous students who may struggle with Western approaches to education. This study explores Māori student and graduate perspectives to provide insights into the value of recognizing cultural identity as ngā taonga hunahuna (hidden treasures). The paper provides empirical support for introducing ways of enabling Māori students to embrace their cultural identity, and consequently enhance their employability. A glossary of terms is provided in Appendix A for the convenience of readers, to find translations of words used in Te Reo (Māori language, an official NZ language).

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employability

Employability is a complex concept often confused with employment outcomes, such as securing a job (Artess et al., 2017; Gedye & Beaumont, 2018; Rowe & Zegwaard, 2017). Bennett (2018, p. i) recently described employability as "the ability to find, create and sustain meaningful work across career lifetime" therefore implying a need for individuals to be adaptable and flexible to accommodate the requirements of an unpredictable and ever changing world of work. Employability includes an individual's need to seek personally rewarding work but also for the work to be of value to society,

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both locally and globally (Bennett, 2019; Yorke & Knight, 2007). According to Yorke and Knight (2007), employability requires four broad achievements; knowledge and understanding, general and discipline specific skills, self-efficacy and metacognition. Employability literature in higher education (HE) and WIL (Oliver, 2015; Pool & Sewell, 2007) is extensive and takes into account a range of stakeholder perspectives including those of the students, graduates, institutions, workplaces, and policy makers. Yet, little attention has been paid to the role cultural identity may have in developing or enhancing student's and graduate's employability.

In this age of rapidly evolving technology and uncertainty caused by events, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, workplaces are becoming more unpredictable. New forms of employment (e.g., virtual workplaces, flexible work patterns, etc.) are emerging, while others are regressing (e.g., service and transport industry) (Hajkowicz et al., 2012; OECD, 2021b). Changing employment roles and practices put pressure on what it might mean to be employable. Employability development is centered more on *ways of being* rather than functional aspects of employability or *ways of knowing* (Barnett, 2007). Thus, there is a growing need to think of our student learners as lifelong learners and how they can best be prepared for a life of career change and ongoing learning. A key element to this approach is the development of employability as metacognition, where learners engage in cognitive and social development to advance as capable, well informed professionals (Bennett & Ferns, 2017; Jackson, 2017). The metacognition concept of employability is based on Bandura's social cognitive theory where people learn from observing others and thereby develop their own "personal agency, self-efficacy, self-regulation, cognitive skills and emotional states" (Ngonda et al., 2017, p. 223). Students on WIL placements are typically exposed to tertiary education institutions and workplaces strongly influenced by the dominant Western frameworks, structures, and practices. The overriding Western viewpoint may not be compatible with the employability development of students with a non-Western cultural identity.

International trends reveal an increasing number of students are seeking higher education consequently leading to a greater diversity in the student population (OECD, 2021a). This increased diversity within the current student population highlights the glaring evidence of social or cultural inequity not being catered for in many courses of study (Bennett & Ferns, 2017). The growth of minority tertiary student groups raises a central and seemingly neglected aspect of employability development, that is, their identity, and in particular their cultural identity. To date, employability literature tends to stem from the dominant Western viewpoint due to student demographics and the workplace organizations being researched. The leading Western myopic position has reinforced the way knowledge is generally developed, applied, and practiced.

References to culture in the WIL literature focuses on the impact of workplace culture on student learning and the student's cultural competence, for example being able to work respectfully and effectively with people of different cultures (Cooper et al., 2010; Valencia-Forrester et al., 2019). In this article, we argue it is critical for employability curriculum to include developing 'ways of being' based on the life experiences that one has had in observing all rites of passage in a Māori way (Karetu, 1990; Shaw, 2021). Here, the student's cultural identity is critically important with Māori students, who are Tangata whenua (the Indigenous people of NZ), being the second largest ethnic group in the country (Stats NZ, n.d.). Therefore, the question arising is; how can we best support Māori students to maximize their employability by fully bringing their cultural identity into WIL workplaces?

Cultural Identity Within Work-Integrated Learning

Developing professional identity is one part of the narrative around the outcomes and benefits of WIL (Trede & Jackson, 2019; Jackson, 2016). Less commonly recognized and explored in this context is the enhancement of the student's cultural identity, as a significant part of self-identity. Cooper et al. (2010) recognize the impact that life experiences (including gender, age, race, sexuality, culture) can have on learning in the workplace. Students who identify with a particular social, ethnic or cultural group may be influenced, with how and what they learn, how they deal with unfamiliar practices, how they interact, and how they perceive themselves. Without adequate preparation, students may not maximize their potential, or they may encounter identity crises or loss of confidence when faced with unfamiliar, cross-cultural environments steeped in unknown nuances where there may be differences in cultural ways of being. Tomlinson (2017) explains cultural capital as developing culturally valued knowledge that someone might apply to a workplace. Much of this cultural knowledge can be formed outside of formal education through familial customs, practices and behaviors. The Western viewpoint dominates workplace practices such that non-Western students and graduates can be denied from being themselves. Cultural identity and cultural wellbeing, have the potential to impact significantly on "sustainable Māori success" (Moon, 2012, p.1), within academia and workplaces.

The 2012-2016 HE employability review by Artess et al. (2017) generated an extensive list of graduate attributes which they suggested were more than just employability skills. These findings align with the employability skills framework published by Jackson (2015). Notably, there are limited references in either study to cultural competence, intelligence or identity. It is possible cultural influences in these studies are positioned within the personal literacy areas. However, if cultural identity or similar notions are not clearly featured in a list of graduate attributes, then cultural identity is unlikely to be singled out and considered as an important component of employability. We argue that cultural identity is an important, yet overlooked aspect of employability development in WIL to be recognized and fostered.

The challenge in WIL programs is to find a way to connect "Indigenous ways of knowing with other ways of knowing" (Cooper et al., 2010, p.71) such that all stakeholders' and workplace experiences are enriched. Ferns et al.'s (2019) framework for enhancing graduate employability through WIL, discusses the importance of workplaces having social and cultural inclusion. In recent times there has been a trend for NZ workplaces (including universities) to be more aligned with Te Tiriti o Waitangi (the Treaty of Waitangi - the founding agreement between the English Crown and Māori) to be more inclusive and representative of Maori. Today's graduates need to be culturally aware and respectful in NZ's diverse society and they need to recognize the value of 'knowing self' in particular their own cultural identity and what this uniqueness can bring to a workplace.

Workplaces in Aotearoa New Zealand

In recent years we (researchers and NZ citizens) have noticed changes in the way NZ society, especially workplaces, recognize and incorporate Matauranga (Māori knowledge) and Te Reo (the Maori language) within practices, publications, websites and documents. This metamorphosis is particularly visible in Government departments such as District Health Boards (DHB), educational institutions (universities, schools etc.), Sport NZ, and television, and within some areas of the privately owned businesses such as Air New Zealand. Within the sport and recreation industry the use of Te Reo and tikanga (Māori protocols) is becoming more prevalent and supported through the use of initiatives such as Sport NZ's New Zealand Sport and Recreation Awards. Sport NZ's annual awards "celebrate

individuals and organizations making outstanding contributions to enhance people's lives through sport and recreation" (Sport New Zealand, 2021, para. 1). An award section added in 2021 was the Māori Participation Taonga "to acknowledge an outstanding individual, group or organization that contributes to whanau [family], hapū [community], iwi [tribe] and Māori Wellbeing through physical activity" (Sport New Zealand, 2021, para. 4). These awards may influence the way in which organizations engage with the communities they serve, their workforce and their interactions with each other.

CONTEXT AND AIM OF THE STUDY

An ongoing priority for Universities New Zealand and the NZ government is to improve the success of Māori through learning and teaching initiatives, student support and policies, such as Priority 3 of the Tertiary Education Strategy 2014-2019 (Theodore et al., 2018; Universities New Zealand, 2016). Māori make up 14.9% of the total population with Māori students making up 12% of all domestic enrolments in NZ, an increase of 12% since 2010 (Universities New Zealand, 2021). Results published from the Graduate Longitudinal Study New Zealand (GLSNZ) showed 48% of Māori graduates were first in their immediate family to attend and complete a university education (Theodore et al., 2016, 2018). Theodore et al.'s (2016) study reported three main benefits of a degree for Māori; personal development, obtaining employment, and being a role model for education within family and community. When considering a career, many Māori wanted to make a contribution to their community and to make a difference in some way. Interestingly, one key barrier identified for Māori in HE participation was a lack of cultural responsiveness to match cultural identity, hence supporting the topic of this paper.

Exploring an individual's cultural identity is supported within the Auckland University of Technology's Bachelor of Sport and Recreation (BSR) program with one of the eight graduate capabilities being: mōhio i te mātauranga Māori (cognizant of Māori knowledge). All students in the BSR program, irrespective of their ethnicity, are given the opportunity to develop a greater understanding of Māori knowledge within their degree and undertake a one year part-time WIL placement. If a student's interest in Māori knowledge is not already active, especially for Māori students, the BSR curriculum may awaken a desire to learn about NZ heritage, culture and self. According to Stewart et al. (2021), this sort of approach "intends to demonstrate the commitment of the university to biculturalism, Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and principles of diversity and inclusiveness" (p. 8). Approximately 20% of AUT's BSR enrolments identify as Māori which is appreciably higher than the national statistics stated above. The attraction of Māori to the BSR is possibly due to the strong value, interest and levels of participation in sport existing within Māori communities (Moon, 2012), and the more applied nature of the degree with its strong WIL approach.

The aim of this study was to explore employability from a Māori perspective through the experiences and reflections of Māori students, graduates and industry employers participating in a WIL program within a university degree. The outcomes of the study are to help inform the development of a sustainable framework for embedding mātauranga Maori in a WIL program to enhance employability outcomes for Māori students. From the study, this paper reports on the insights gained on cultural identity as an employability attribute being enriched through a WIL program.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Case Study Methodology

Case study methodology was employed to enable the researchers to gain in-depth understanding of a phenomena from multiple stakeholders viewpoints. Central to case study is the notion of the case being viewed as a contained unit (Thomas, 2015), a system bound by time, place and context (Stake, 2005). It is the complexity within the case that becomes the focus of what is to be studied (Lucas et al., 2018). This case study is bound by Māori whakapapa (genealogy) of the participants within a Sport and Recreation HE programme. The study was also underpinned by kaupapa Māori (Maori agenda), as Henry and Pene (2001) explain "thus embraces traditional beliefs and ethics, while incorporating contemporary resistance strategies that embody the drive for tino rangatiratanga (self-determination and empowerment) for Māori people" (p. 236).

Methods

The original intention for the study was to engage five participants from each of the three stakeholder groups; current Year 3 BSR students (S), BSR graduates or alumni who had been employed for at least one year post-graduation (G) and employers from organizations who were likely to employ BSR Māori graduates. Unfortunately, data collection became constrained and came to a halt due to COVID-19 lockdowns commencing in March, 2020. Up until this time it was possible to recruit three participants from each stakeholder group and collect data. All recruitment and data collection processes were guided and supported by one researcher to ensure all culturally appropriate protocols were understood and followed. The researchers formed a collaborative unit, with their roles in the university including; academic, WIL co-ordinator and Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences, Associate Dean, Māori Advancement. The Faculty role provides strategic leadership to: enhancing and supporting teaching, learning and the Māori student experience; promoting staff autonomy and agency to improve equity for Māori students and staff; increasing participation in and the quality of Māori-centered scholarship.

This paper reports on the insights gained from six self-identified Māori students and graduates who were female with one male graduate, and all aged in their 20s. An invitation to participate, and an information sheet, along with a brief online questionnaire specifically tailored to each participant group, was sent via email. The brief questionnaire was used to collect demographic information and initiated some thought by the participants around employability and what it might mean to each person. The insights gained from the questionnaire responses were utilized to inform questions to be employed in the semi-structured individual or group hui (meeting) similar to interviews or focus groups with the additions of incorporating tikanga (Māori protocols) each lasting 30-40 minutes. These hui took place to gain a deeper understanding of employability from a Māori perspective. All data collection protocols followed Māori tikanga with all invitations, and questionnaires a written opening address in Te Reo. Protocols for the hui varied depending on where it took place and who was present. A clear distinction was made at the hui between who are hau kainga (home people of that place) and manuhiri (visitors), which then defines the role each person will play in that particular place. The hui began with a karakia (prayer), opportunities to introduce oneself with a pepeha (introduction of self – recited in Te Reo) and kai (food) was blessed for consumption during the hui. Two of the hui were conducted remotely with one graduate hui taking place via Zoom and one student hui taking place via mobile phone.

All data were audio recorded on two recording devices to ensure there was a backup if one device failed. The audio files were sent to a transcribing company for intelligent transcription. Utilising

NVivo software all data were analyzed using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013, 2020). Data analysis was predominantly conducted inductively with two or three researchers engaging with the data collaboratively. To ensure consistency and reliability of the findings, members of the research team conducted regular meetings to discuss developments in the analysis and come to a consensus. For this study to be conducted ethical approval was granted by the university ethics committee (AUTEC application number 19/251).

FINDINGS

More Than Just a Degree

The Māori BSR students and graduates in this study valued having within their degree, opportunities that enabled and encouraged personal development, including the acknowledgment of, and relationship with their Māori culture. Being of Māori descent does not automatically equate to being cognizant of Mātauranga or fluent in Te Reo. Along with developing a professional identity within their degree, these Māori students began to see their world, and contribute to the construction of their cultural identity. It is not uncommon for Indigenous peoples to be disconnected from their ethnicity. The degree became an opportunity to learn about themselves and motivated and engaged them to connect and learn about their 'cultural self'. As one student explained she was:

> Quite disconnected [from her mother's Māori heritage] so being Māori did not influence my [WIL] decision making… at University... talking about the Māori values, and different principles and how things work in different worlds, is interesting, relevant, and engaging. I think because you feel like you're actually learning about yourself. (S3)

Another student explained how her degree became the catalyst for exploring her ancestry in order to get to know more about herself. She said:

> As I get older I want to know more. I started that phase when I started Uni. I do want to know about my ancestors, where I come from, and what we are all about. So yeah Uni's actually opened me up to thinking like that. Uni has really brought back to the roots, back to me because I think I need to just, focus a little bit more on myself, before everybody else. (S1)

Māori BSR students and graduates are likely to be first in the family to gain a university degree, and to experience learning in a HE environment. Value was placed on the attainment of a degree as a means to prepare for and enter the workforce with confidence. Having a degree demonstrated ones the ability to work hard and learn, with one graduate making the following comments:

> I felt that I had that piece of paper [degree] to get me through the door. Education proves to businesses that I have got potential; [WIL] experience shows that I am already doing it. So, it is the balance of both. I felt that I did well because I was prepared. My preparation definitely in the Degree. (G1)

Completing a degree with a WIL component that scaffolded experiences and opportunities supported the graduates to develop self-efficacy and confidence to apply for and secure meaningful work. A bonus was entering a field of work where they had a passion:

> It [degree] brought peace and comfort when I was applying for jobs and more peace and comfort when I was going for the job that I wanted. Because right now I can rightly say that I don't feel like I work. I get paid a lot and it is my dream job. (G1)

> I can only get my confidence from my [WIL] experiences and if I didn't have those experiences then I wouldn't be confident, in putting them on my next foot forward. (G2)

These graduates were conscious of what an employer might be looking for in an employee. Although placement experiences were part of their degree, some employers sought an experienced employee over someone with a degree. The following comments show:

> …they hired me while I was doing co-op [WIL]...But after that, it was hard to branch out. It was difficult even though I had the degree, they wanted experience instead. They wanted someone who had already done it before rather than somebody who could potentially become that role. (G1)

A degree is a good starting point to accumulate industry knowledge, but once employed the workplace learning needs to continue. The ability to transfer knowledge and being open to ongoing learning related to the workplace was important. "You've got to be in the position to really learn, it's just random like you know logistical things" (G3) and

> I am still learning and learning how to manage events and through learning how to manage events, I was able to understand how this whole facility works… I was on a good platform to be seen and if they needed anything then I just showed them what I could do by applying those principles. And then as I started learning, a job came up… Doing that I was able to apply my degree again and still apply those principles. (G1)

The Value of Cultural Identity

One graduate claimed being Māori; "It's a superpower" (G3). Her cultural identity enabled her to secure employment in an organization valuing Māori principles. Developing, recognizing, and feeling comfortable with being Māori takes time and will only develop within a culturally responsive environment. Having a Māori worldview in a Western society, creates a 'double conscious' advantage, where both worlds can be navigated competently. The following quotes highlight these factors: "Yeah, I definitely just figured it out during [my degree], that being Maori is special"(G1), and

> …at the point where you feel comfortable being Maori is when you know that you've got the X factor. So I think if you've been taught from a perspective where there's no Maori influence or there's no Maori text or there's no Maori folks or anything you know it's always and you're the other side of it. (G3)

> Being Maori is the X factor in everything I do, maybe the whole world doesn't see that… I think being Maori keeps you pretty grounded cause you know kind of where you've come from and how did you get there. (G3)

A student who specifically chose a WIL placement where she could engage with Māori communities found she was able to progress her cultural connection due to the nature of the work she was doing. She said:

> I'm doing a disservice because I am not [very knowledgeable] in Māori. I am very much still learning and probably always will…I understand that in my workplace, I probably take hold or take charge [of things Maori]…My placements have connected me to Māori opportunities, and Māori health prospects. (S2)

Contributing to the future of young people's lives and their understanding of Māori cultural practices was important to another student. One student when she was not completely conversant with a culturally related topic found she had the confidence and ongoing passion to grow her cultural knowledge. She implied culture and country are intrinsically interwoven and this was important to nurture, value and embrace:

> If that's culture then I'm up for that, yeah I'm ready to do it, you know I'm not going to hold back…are they [school children] going to know, what protocols or things to carry out before they do certain things, or traditions or information. [For example] doing like prayer before a bush walk…they've taken that [Maori knowledge] home, and now a few parents say, "we know how to pray for our food in Māori", which is cool you know. Some kids don't experience that kind of stuff, or even just walking through the forest, and we're like this tree belongs to, you know and just kind of explain a little bit of our culture behind it…and even Māori children they're like I never knew this, my Nan didn't tell me that…oh well it might be a little bit different, but this is what it is, this is who we are, this is our land, so I think co-op placement altogether it helps you just culturally express what you know already, and then what you don't know you can kind of go and find out…I think everyone's starting to embrace the Māori culture, and you know starting to realize this is, it's New Zealand you know, this is our country, this is our land and we're trying to preserve it kind of thing. (S1)

Significance of Te Reo

One graduate indicated the significance of Te Reo, but lamented he was not a fluent speaker. He said "[Te Reo] is a treasure that I wish I had" (G1). He went on to suggest that learning to speak Te Reo was something he had a great desire to do. Being conversant in Te Reo and competent with Mātauranga is a hidden treasure to be made visible and recognized. He explained why he believed Te Reo should be valued by workplaces and communities:

> I see Te Reo as a gem. It is a real treasure that not many people have, Maori included. But I believe that by incorporating Te Reo and the fundamentals of Maori, I believe that it will actually strengthen businesses as well because it is a family focus rather than a business focus. If you are too business minded and you forget the people, business doesn't go well. But if you have the right balance, I believe you can do that through speaking Te Reo. (G1)

Similarly these sentiments were shared by a student who identified how her ability to speak Te Reo could enhance her employability. Having a strong cultural identity meant she could support an organization to develop its cultural approach to business. She explained "Being fluent in conversational Te Reo is a massive thing that's going to help you get employed, because it's so useful in terms of helping these organizations become more culturally competent" (S2).

Organizational Culture in New Zealand is Changing

The renaissance of Māori culture has led to the incorporation of Te Reo and Mātauranga into business practices which has created a demand for those identifying as Māori. One graduate stated, "I know a lot of businesses out there. They are looking for Māori. It is a competitive world"(G1). The need for organizations to be more diverse, includes having a Māori employee. This may mean some Māori employees have two roles; their actual work and other cultural related tasks. Dual roles can become a burden, especially if the employee is not adequately prepared for these roles or do not have a Māori mentor. It is possible attempts by organizations to be seen as culturally competent may be tokenistic if

it lacks genuine engagement with Māori. The following quotes exemplify the experiences of being Māori in some workplaces:

> I think now, that I am very much not the token Māori but if anything Māori is needed, I'm kind of pushed to the front…I am still learning about tikanga and reo and everything like that. In terms of job opportunities, being someone who is drawn upon a lot of the times for these Māori things, I feel currently it's kind of a disservice to Māori as a whole, because I don't have all the resources that my Māori peers do, I can't speak fluently. Although I am comfortable doing a karakia here and there, I should not be just a tick in the box. (S1)

DISCUSSION

The current employment environment in NZ is starting to appreciate and recognize the contribution of Māori values and principles in the workplace. However, caution needs to be taken as not all organizations are genuine in their inclusion of Te Tiriti o Waitangi principles. The increase of organizations genuinely seeking to embrace Māori diversity and values is driving the demand for employees competent in tikanga. In the context of NZ being Māori adds to employability. Contributing to the conversation about employability, cultural identity should be recognized, valued and visible as it is ngā taonga hunahuna (hidden treasures).

Student employability attributes include; the knowledge gained from their degree, personal characteristics, and industry related experience. Recognizing cultural identity adds a depth and quality to the expected list of graduate credentials. Providing HE students with opportunities to develop their cultural identity is critical, and ethically the right approach. Learning about one's cultural identity, an innate treasure, is empowering, meaningful and fulfilling which can be transferred into the workplace. It is important for Māori students to be able to translate the cultural learnings coming from their WIL experiences into something recognized and valued by themselves, and prospective employers. In line with traditional Māori society, the interpersonal interactions and relationships developed during the students WIL experiences can be enhancements of the student's mana (prestige) and well-being. This research contributes to understanding student's cultural identity development within HE and WIL programs, and ultimately future workplaces and society. Ongoing research is needed to explore cultural identity as a key element of employability as graduates engage in global citizenship.

Aligning with Hay's (2020) research with Māori social work placements, it is timely to explore different ways to implement WIL programs across NZ industries and beyond. This is important for Māori students where the array of workplaces cultures may stem from either a Western and/or Māori worldview. Both worldviews place different demands on the student by positively or negatively influencing their cultural identity and self-confidence. Hay (2020) states "some Māori students may not be confident in Māori spaces and may need additional assistance to prepare" (p. 65) for their placement. The students and graduates in this study commented on the lack of kaitiaki (guardians) of 'Māori ways of being' in sport and how they were often called upon to fulfil 'all things Māori' in their workplaces, even if their knowledge was limited. These students and graduates are part of a movement tasked with the responsibility of maintaining the mana (prestige) of 'Māori ways of being' within their respective sport industry, therefore expanding their employability.

Developing employability should be a shared process and responsibility for all stakeholders including students, universities, government, businesses and industry (Smith et al., 2018). Scaffolding activities within a course of learning to enable development of the student's cultural identity and competence should be done in the most holistic way possible. This includes enabling Māori students to engage

with their learning in a culturally meaningful way that is not seen as tokenistic or a box ticking exercise. Knowing what employers might look for in a graduate is important as workplaces are constantly changing especially around inclusivity and cultural capability. As graduates these students can have an enduring impact on organizational practices, and future WIL placement students.

This study initiates dialogue for ways of providing Māori students with opportunities and resources within HE and WIL programs to acknowledge and support the role cultural identity has on learning, to explore and develop cultural identity, and to consider ways to champion and integrate Māori perspectives. It is not clear how current Western WIL program designs may disadvantage Māori students (Hay, 2020). Ensuring Māori are supported to enhance their cultural identity and have the confidence to be who they are will not only benefit these individuals, but the workforce and our society. Institutions need to think creatively about how to enhance cultural capital among students (Tomlinson, 2017). WIL is a good place to do this.

An important part of doing this research was to develop protocols and strategies for culturally appropriate research. As might be expected the Māori tikanga (customs and traditional values) utilized for this study have been received differently depending on the participant being interviewed. This is one of the challenges with undertaking this type of research where the researcher and participant's perspectives regarding tikanga may not align. When there is alignment of tikanga, the participant is likely to feel more comfortable during the initiation of the hui and the converse can apply. The Māori students and graduates who participated in the study, when asked about the research process used, expressed an appreciation of the tikanga as an acknowledgement of who they are. Interestingly, even those who were not fluent in Te Reo or strongly connected to their Māori culture seemed to appreciate the intention of the researchers' acknowledgement. Any embarrassment felt by the participants was triggered by the feeling that they should be able to or would like to respond or contribute in Te Reo. As the researchers already had developed good relationships with their participants, when they were undergraduates, they were comfortable enough to express this experience. Feedback from one graduate supported our approach:

> Because being Maori is an honest blessing that not many people have. I am not just speaking about Te Reo, I am speaking about being Maori and being raised Maori and being raised with Maori. Because by starting off with those protocols, it brings in that family environment because Maori is all about family. And so, when you start off with that [tikanga], for me being Maori I felt comfortable because I feel like I am at home. (G1)

CONCLUSION

Many workplaces and organizations in NZ are dominated by Western approaches, however this is changing as the importance of the Māori worldview is becoming more widely recognized, valued and fostered. Nationally, this appreciation is advancing, especially with the younger generation who value diversity and want to see a Māori worldview equally included. Campaigns like the "Proud to be Māori" launched by Te Whānau o Waipareira in April 2021, actively supports moving forward to achieve more positive life outcomes, something to be seen in HE and WIL. Undertaking culturally responsive approaches to preparing students for the world of work may benefit diverse student groups by managing employability enablers and constraints. Therefore, understanding employability for Māori from a Māori worldview is critical, as being Māori is a 'superpower' and enhances employability. In closing with a whakatauki (proverb); "He tina ki runga, he tāmore kia raro" (To flourish above, be

firmly rooted below). Those who are firmly rooted in their culture will find satisfaction in all aspects of life.

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STATEMENT OF PLACE

Patricia R. Lucas

My great grandparents on my maternal side journeyed by ship to the shores of Aotearoa New Zealand to settle on the outskirts of Ngāmoto (New Plymouth). My grandmother and mother were born and raised here. On my paternal side my grandparents travelled to Aotearoa from England and Switzerland. My father and I were both born in the small coastal meat freezing-works town called Waitara situated on the banks of Waitara te awa (river) under the majestic Taranaki te maunga (mountain). My family have always had a deep connection with the whenua (land), as do I. My turangawaewae (area I now call home) is our farm near Waiwera, just north of Tamaki Makaurau (Auckland). I am a mother, farmer, and academic with a passion for nurturing the sustainable growth and development of our future, the people and the land. WIL is a great place to do this.

Sally A. Rae

On my mother's side my great, great, grandmother was Laura Harding from the edge of the Tukituki te awa (river) at the base of the Ruahine maunga (mountains) (inland New Zealand). My mother's great, great, grandfather's people are from Wairoa and Tologa Bay (coastal New Zealand). I do not know much about this side of the family (my grandfather Andrew Gemmell died in WWII), except that anyone over the age of 40 living in the area with pure white hair is probably related to me. My father's great, great, grandfather's family were shipowners from Scotland and they settled in Dunedin (coastal New Zealand). My father's mothers' people are from Paeroa (inland New Zealand), their land lies on the edge of the Waihou te awa at the base of the Ruahine te maunga – their family name was changed and it is difficult to track that lineage. My whānau is of Aotearoa New Zealand.

Robert M. Hogg

My identity as a Māori academic is grounded in my whānau (family) connections. On my mother's side, I start with my maunga (mountain), ko Putauaki, which stands proud and majestic as a central reference point for its descendants. Then there is my awa (river), ko Rangitaiki, where at every bend is an imprint of those who have previously traversed its waters. I now make reference to my waka (canoe), ko Mataatua, which travelled across vast oceans carrying my people, my iwi (tribe) ko Ngāti Awa. With the arrival of my people to Aotearoa (New Zealand) came a rich, deep, and ancient Mātauranga (knowledge) system. On my father's side, I proudly carry my Scottish heritage as referenced in my surname. Our three children are representatives of their parent's whakapapa (genealogical) connections, as captured in their full names. They are remnants reminding me of the very connections that informs my thinking.

Nicola A. Anderson

My ancestry is from the United Kingdom, with linkages to England and Wales. I was born in Middlesbrough, a large industrial town in North Yorkshire, England. My parents immigrated to Aotearoa New Zealand in the early 1970's and since then, Tāmaki Makaurau (Auckland) has been our

wākāinga (true home). I grew up in South Auckland, a diverse community, rich in culture and a place that will always be home. I am a mother of three, which is my 'why'. My work within WIL provides me the opportunity to connect, collaborate and enable, aligning with my personal values of enhancing the lives of others.

Carolyn T. Cairncross

My great great grandparents were immigrants to Australia, from England, Ireland, Scotland and Scandinavia, settling in in rural Victoria, while my family lived around the edge of Corayo with our mountain Ude Youang. Since migrating to Aotearoa New Zealand, my New Zealand whanau identify with Auckland's Maungakiekie and Waitemata Harbour. I feel privileged in considering myself a woman of both Australia and Aotearoa.

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APPENDIX A: Glossary of Terms. Te Reo – English.

Hapū - subtribe
Hau kainga - home people of that place
Hui - meeting
Iwi - tribe
Kai - food
Kaitiaki - guardian
Karakia - prayer
Kaupapa Māori – Māori agenda
Mana - prestige
Manuhiri - visitors
Māori - indigenous people of NZ
Mōhio i te mātauranga Māori – cognisant of Māori knowledge
Ngā taonga hunahuna - hidden treasures
Pepeha - introduction of self in Te Reo
Tangata whenua - the indigenous people of NZ
Te Reo - Māori language and an official NZ language

Te Tiriti o Waitangi - NZ's founding agreement (the Treaty between Māori and the English Crown)
Tikanga - Māori protocols
Tino rangatiratanga - self-determination and empowerment
Whakapapa - Māori genealogy
Whakatauki - proverb
Whānau - family