

# Reclaiming space: Occupational resistance and identity formation for Māori occupational therapy students

H U H A N A W H A U T E R E  
&  
D R E M A T O K O L A H I

12 FEBRUARY,  
2026

# Research Team

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# Research Methodology

## STUDY DESIGN

Qualitative participatory action research with 4 occupational therapy students who identified as Māori and were 2nd or 3rd year completing an 8 week fieldwork placement in a Kaupapa Māori setting.

## COLLECTING DATA

Students engaged in:

- Focus Groups
- Pre-placement
- Mid-placement
- Post-placement

Audio weekly diary entries reflecting on their learning and experiences.

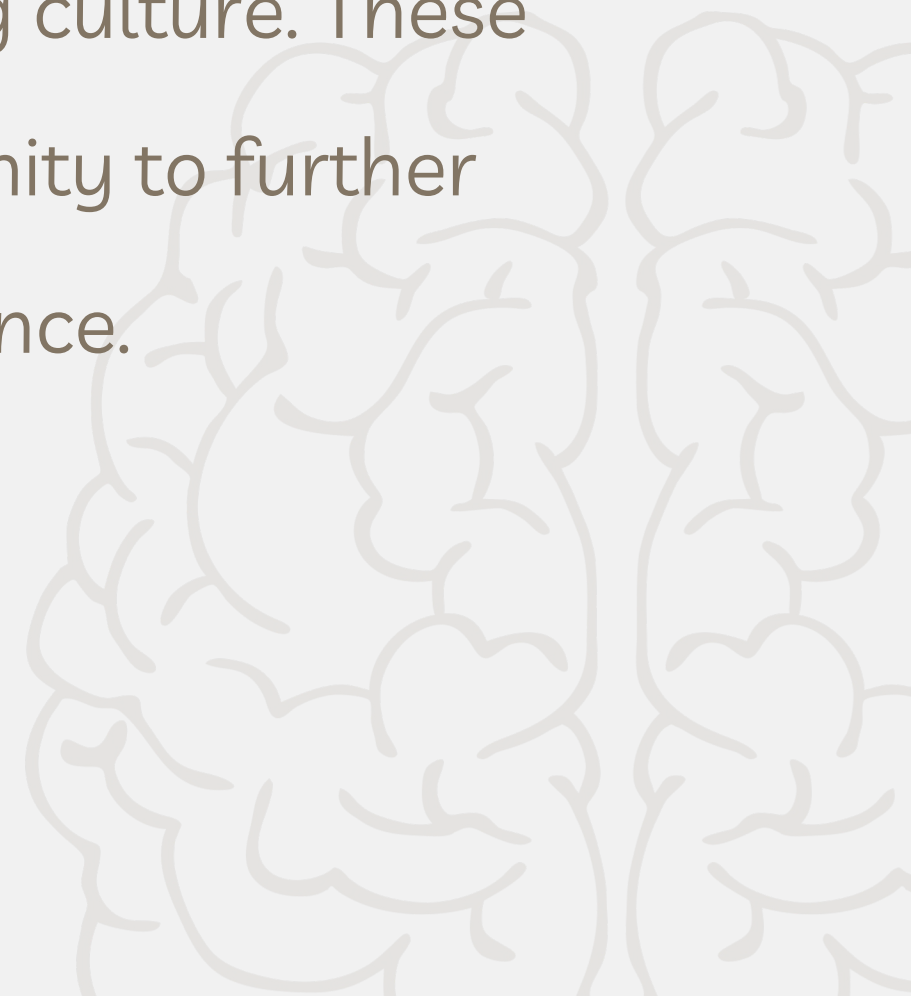
## ANALYSING DATA

The focus group and weekly audio diary entries were transcribed and then themed. At the mid and post focus groups these themes were presented to the students to ensure the research team was capturing accurate themes.



# Occupational Resistance

"Occupational resistance" was exemplified by Māori individuals maintaining their culture within these spaces, keeping it alive for marginalised groups in a society dominated by a prevailing culture. These placements provide an opportunity to further strengthen that resilience.



# Doing

*“There’s already so many, like occupation based interventions, getting whanau out into taiao, doing mahi a toi, all of the Patai that kaimahi here ask it always thinking about those wider contexts that we have in our model... My big learning was readjusting my like not all interventions have to be this like big Super planned out process, Some of them can just be like being in that moment and just being in it.”*

# Being

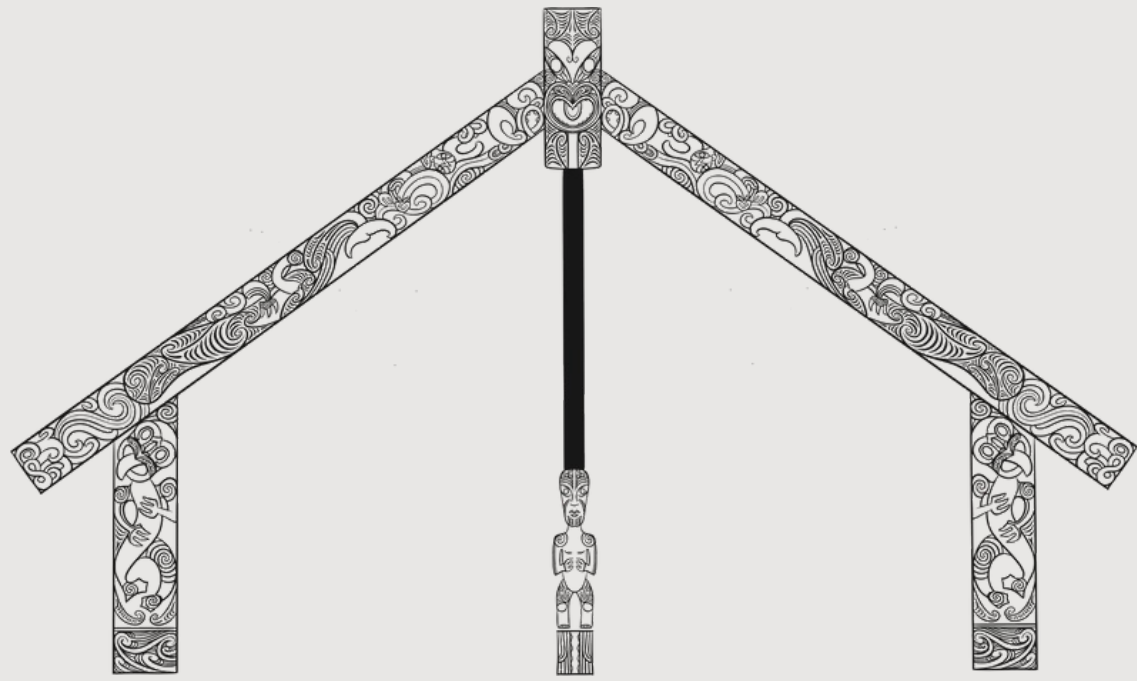
*“Māoritanga... and ...expressions, expressing Māoritanga and getting to be Māori in a Māori space, how awesome it is to be in a space where your way of being is the norm... there is never that pressure because that is just your way of being... in these spaces you don't have to explain why they work, why they are valuable, why whanau and whaiora love them, you just do them.”*

# Becoming

*“advocating for our Māori whanau, especially seeing that inequities that they face... advocating for them and their needs and their wants is probably one of the other big things that I’ll take into practice”*

# Belonging

*“...this is really cool because this is when I actually saw the benefits of a Kaupapa Māori service... just seeing the pride that the people took... saying who they are... their pepeha... they realised they whakapapa back to the same place... it was really just cool seeing the connection that people could make based on their families and their whānau.”*

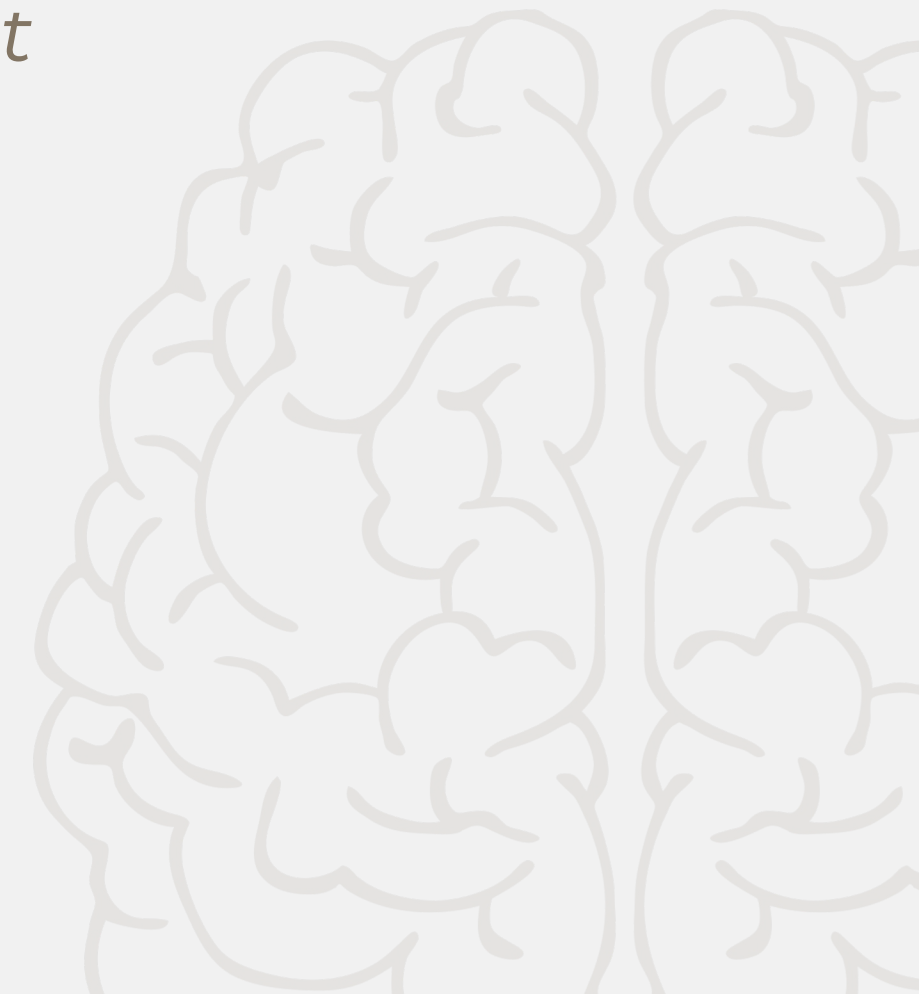


# Wero – Challenge

Change your thinking around research methodologies and how you empower participants.

# Western Research Methodologies

- *Researcher-driven: The researcher designs the study, sets the questions, and controls interpretation.*
- *Participants as subjects: Their role is often passive, providing data rather than shaping the process.*
- *Anonymity and confidentiality: Participants' identities are concealed to protect privacy and maintain objectivity.*
- *Objective stance: Emphasis on neutrality and minimising researcher bias.*
- *Goal: Produce generalisable knowledge, often privileging dominant paradigms.*

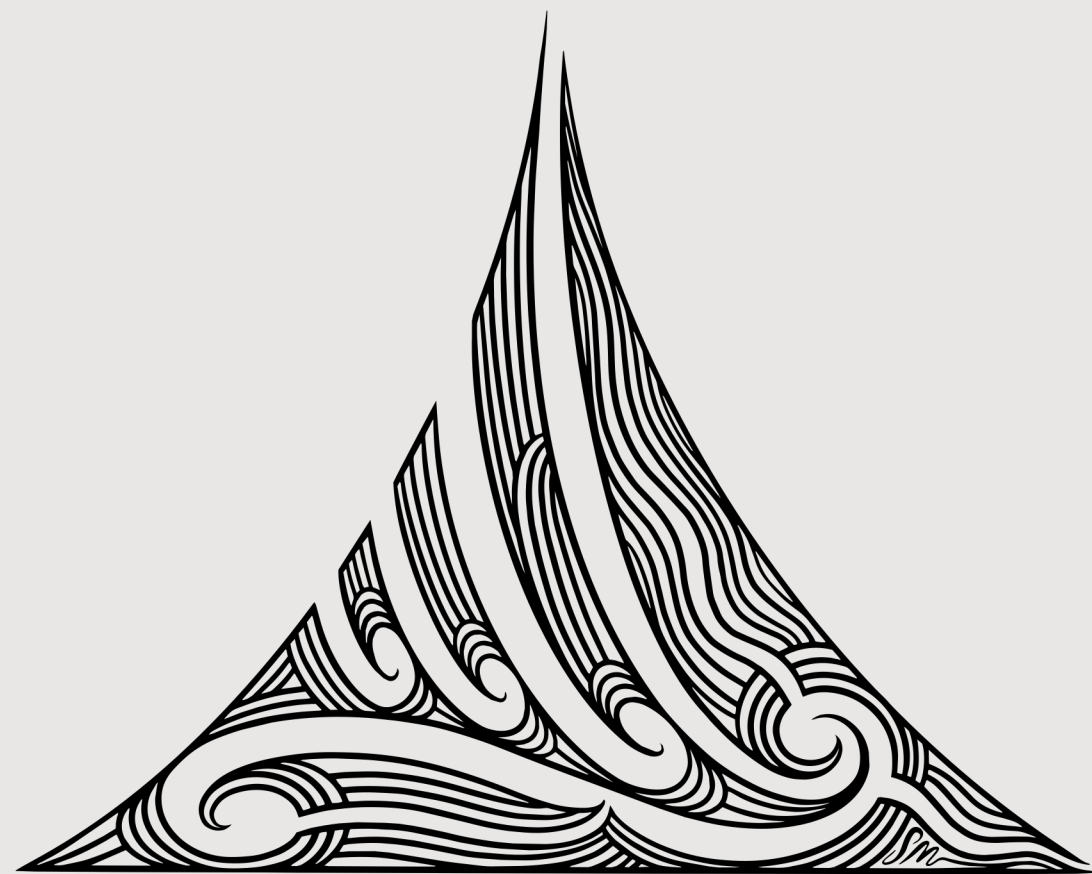


# Participatory or Indigenous Methodologies

- *Centre relational accountability*
- *Value participant voice and co-construction of knowledge*
- *Often reject anonymity when identity and cultural context are integral to meaning*
- *Kotahitanga approach vs individualistic approach*



# What this meant for our research



- Mana-enhancing language – strengths based
- Choice and control
- Decision making in the research process
- Changing the power imbalance knowing that we were lecturers and they were students
- Active collaboration – shared kai, feeding back, seeking opinions, providing koha
- Naming the participants

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# Participant Feedback

*"Yeah, felt very honoured to be a part of the research, ... it was really easy to participate with and hopefully really valuable for you guys because it was also valuable to be able to reflect on some of those things myself while on placement."*

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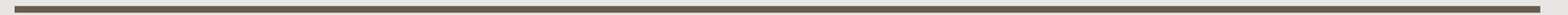
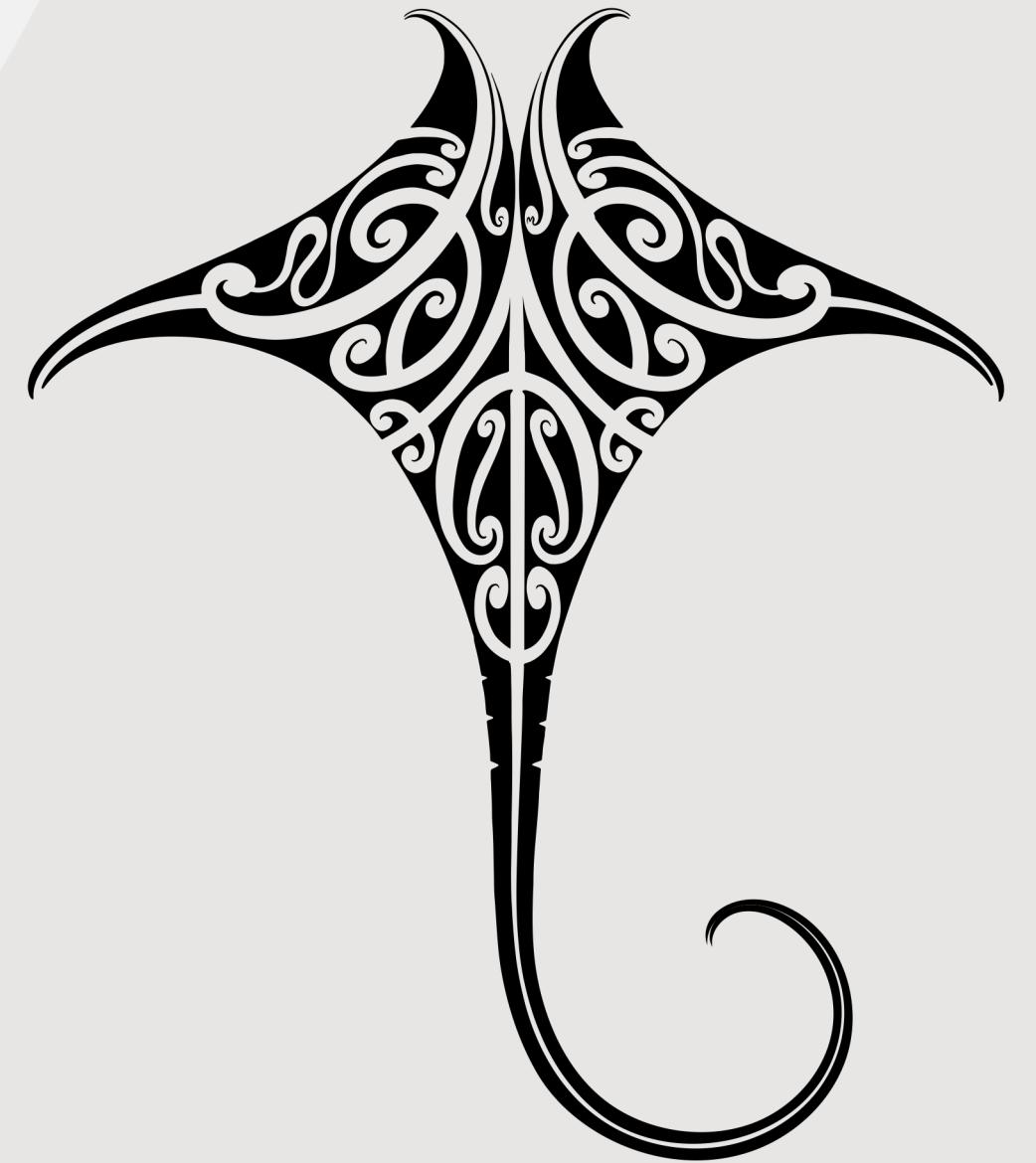
# Thank to our participants

Morgen Hughes (Ngāi Tahu)

Taimania Nepia-Hill (Ngāpuhi)

Bella Stanish-Smyth (Ngāti Porou)

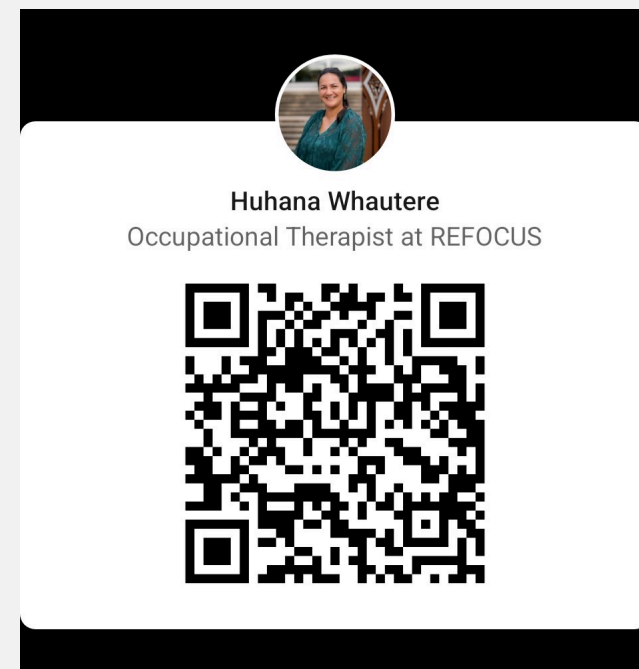
Jade Whiston (Ngāi Tahu)



OTAGO  
POLYTECHNIC

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