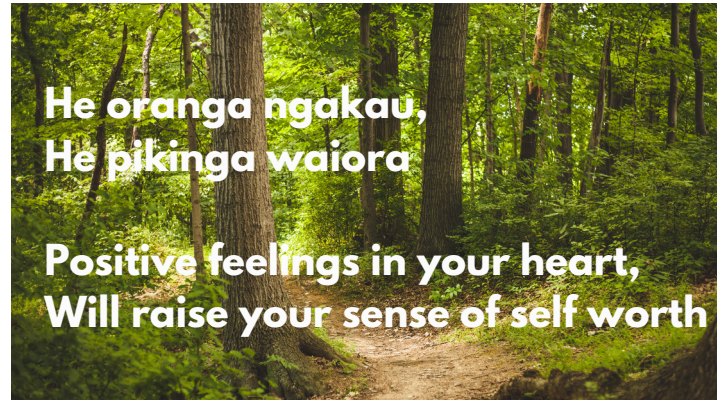


WHAKATAUKĪ

“A SPEEDY LOOK TO THE PAST TO HELP FORGE THE FUTURE”

Marisa McKay, Primary physical education advisor
Physical Education New Zealand



What is a whakataukī?

Te ao Māori is steeped in oral history. The long-standing tradition of whakataukī (historically oral) have provided generations of Māori and New Zealanders with meaning, connection to their ancestors and help to make sense of the world.

Definitions of the term whakataukī or proverb range and vary. This may help to paint a picture:

“a speedy look to the past to help forge the future” (Alsop and Kupenga, pg 9)

Where did the Health and Physical Education whakataukī come from?

The beautiful tāonga that is the Health and Physical Education whakataukī was gifted by Te Kepa Stirling (Te Whānau a Apanui) in the 1990s. Te Kepa was initially a carpenter, who then followed in the footsteps of his wife Pani and retrained as a Physical Education teacher. He continued to add strings to his bow throughout his lifetime including being a Pouako at the Ministry of Education, a Te Reo Māori Teacher at Te Kura Māori o Ngā Tapuwae and was once the Kaumatua at the University of Auckland (when it was the College of Education).

Te Kepa gifted the whakatauki to the Ministry of Education when the New Zealand Curriculum was being compiled. It was given as a koha to the Ministry of Education and they in turn adopted it for the Health and Physical Education learning area. And it was embraced as it represented the wholistic view of health / hauora.

Looking for more?

- Read: Mauri Ora by Alsop and Kupenga
- Watch: YouTube clip on the life of Te Kepa Stirling: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AsCupsdrzZE>

What is the meaning behind the Health and Physical Education whakatauki?

When understanding what a whakataukī means, we can look for the literal translation from Māori to English. However, the true tāonga of whakataukī is that there are many layers of meaning attached to this. In the true sense of understanding whakataukī, we need to ask what does it mean to us? What we see, hear, or read into the whakataukī based on our own knowledge and experience, and how we share that with those around us, gives us a deepened understanding. Understanding whakataukī is a personal experience and this is echoed in the beautiful book Mauri Ora “take what is meant for you, and leave the rest for others” pg 9

The Health and Physical Education curriculum is grounded in this whakataukī. A foundation and connection to the whenua, that guides and aligns the purpose of our teaching and learning in Health and Physical Education. It is the WHY we do, WHAT we do.

As educators and professionals, we can ensure our Health and Physical Education programmes grow our students holistically and are generating positive feelings in the hearts of our students and that we are enhancing their wairua/spirit and raising their sense of self-worth. In doing so we are developing students who positively contribute to their whanau, communities, and society.

What does it mean for your teaching?

It means consciously holding this whakataukī in your heart and head when it comes to planning and teaching programmes in Health and Physical Education.

It means prioritising the holistic development of our students across the richness of the entire Health and Physical Education curriculum rather than isolating areas (such as skill development) and ranking them of higher importance than others.

It means using the whakataukī as a driver for critical reflection on your current Health and Physical Education programmes. Asking questions of your programmes such as:

- are our programmes generating positive feelings in the hearts of our students?
- are our programmes raising our student's sense of self-worth?

That is not to say everything must be happy, effortless, and undemanding. We can grow our self-worth and positive feelings by knowing both our strengths and our weaknesses, what we enjoy and what we don't, our values and attitudes and those of others. Coming to understand ourselves, we can find our home and our place in our whanau, our community, and our society.

Thanks to these physical and health educators their time, feedback, and support to gather information on the history and background of this great tāonga that is the Health and Physical Education whakataukī Clive Pope, Jenny Richardson, Harko Brown, Ian Culpin, and Andy Fraser.



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