

3.1 Noku Te Ao - Activity B



My Journey In Te Ao Haka



Chosen Discipline : Whakaeke

To whakaeke is to make an entrance. It can consist of waiata, haka, karanga and use of traditional weaponry and instruments. Because it isn't limited to any genre, it is often the most innovative item. It acts like a pōwhiri as kapa will introduce who they are and their connection to the host people through pakiwaitara (folklore) and whakapapa (genealogy).

(1) (2)

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/pou-tiaki/130873566/what-makes-up-a-performance-bracket-for-te-matatini>



(Dress Rehearsal - 2022)

I chose to do whakaeke as my discipline because it was always the item that stood out to me the most. I wasn't really a kapa haka girl growing up but a lot of people told me that the whakaeke determines whether the performance would be good or not. (1)(2) The whakaeke for me is the item that really showcases the effort and the creativity that a roopu has put in when performing. (3) It also shows the whanaungatanga of a roopu and how well they can work together as a team. The Whakaeke is the backbone of the performance and the overall best item in my opinion. I chose Whakaeke because I want to be able to develop in that item and expand my knowledge of the different varieties. (7)



The beginning

When I first come to WHS I was so shy, so incredibly nervous that I would not fit in and that **I didn't have a place here in the kura where I belonged. I was always so out of place until I reached Year 11. That was when I was Introduced to Māori Performing Arts**(6) where I was slowly given the opportunity to break out of my shell. Year 11 was when my journey really turned around. Māori Performing Arts was just beginning and Whaea Hema had encouraged me to be a part of it.



(Learning whakaekē from different iwi in Maori Performing Arts - 2021)



(Learning waiata-a-ringā from other iwi - 2021)

I didn't really like it but our teacher Matua Johnny was one of my biggest inspirations into reclaiming my identity as a Māori student. He was supportive and encouraging, whilst also giving feedback that actually helped me when it came to improving in my reo. Matua Johnny was a major influence on me when I chose to do Te Ao Haka. **At first Māori Performing Arts allowed me to sort of break out of my mainstream lifestyle and allowed me to experience different things and be more open-minded when learning Haka.**(7)



(Matua Johnny - 2022)

WHS 2022 Art Showcase

2022 was an interesting year full of opportunities to excel in Maori Performing Arts as Te Ao Haka had just started up. The Art Showcase was one of those opportunities. The showcase itself was an amazing thing to be apart of and just the overall vibe was immaculate. I enjoyed learning our bracket and being able to watch everyone else's many talents.



(WHS 2022 Arts Showcase - Night 1)

Whakarongo e...

Whakarongo te taringa ki te hau taua

E hau mai nei...

Kai te uru

Kai te tai

Kai te rohe o Mataatua e...

Hurihia...

Hurihia ki muri ki ngā tai

Nenehawa kai waho kai te moana

Māreparepa e...

Te hū i Whakaari...Hū!

EKE

Ki te ui mai koe, i pouā mai au i hea?

I pouā mai au i Te awa o Te Atua

I Rangitāiki

I Ōriini, Ōhinemataroa e...

I pouā mai au i hea?

I pouā mai au i te take o Pūtauaki

He ngārara te kai...e

I pouā mai au i hea?

I pouā mai au i te pūawawātanga

O Awaniūārangi wānanga rau...u

He uri mākoko ahau, nō Mataatua

Kia whīta ki te Aka Matua o Tāwhaki nui a Hema

Tū ana ki te tihi o Pūtauaki

Tauaki tū

Tauaki tāngata

Kauria, kauria

Ngā tāniwhaniwha o Te Aka Matua

Ki te puna wai o Te Rangitāiki e

Hōkai taku ara

Ki te Awa o Te Atua

Ki te wai toto o Te Ramaapakura e

Whiti rangi, Whiti nuku

Ki Ōriini, Ko te Pāroa Tōtara

Te tokotoru i Ōtamauru e

Hiki rangi, Heke nuku

Ki te riu, ki Ōhinemataroa

Ki te toka a Taiau e

Tūkariri

Tūkaniwha

Tūkaitaua

KIA WHAKATĀNE AU I AHAU!

Ko wai rā? Ko wai rā?

Ko au ko Te Mānuka Tūtahi

Ko au - ko Te Tahī o Te Rangī e...

Hī!

Whakaeke

Our whakaeke for the showcase was a fairly simple one, but the dynamics is what enhanced it to become a much more versatile and meaningful discipline in our overall bracket. The use of taiaha and patu really gave it an exciting feeling whilst performing and I enjoyed it greatly. The whakaeke itself was very flexible and it required a lot of different movements with precision. Things such as the flicking of heads and when to appropriately pukana. (2)

Small details that greatly impacted the overall performance. Our whakaeke went into the details of our rohe and the whenua our kura stands on. It talks about the different awa that surrounds it and the maunga that represents our kura, seeing as we are a Ngati Awa kura. Whakarongo was our opening part of our eke that set the tone of what we were doing and where we are. Following that we got into ‘I poua’, a Ngati Awa haka that we made into more of a suitable tone for our whakaeke. We paced ourselves as we moved, creating a sort of sneaky and somewhat smooth sort of vibe that showcased what we were trying to interpret. Each move correlated to a line in our eke, whether that be a a wiri to replicate our awa or the the staunch stance we took while talking about Putauaki. Finally the end, ‘Ko wai ra?’. We are Te kura tuarua o Te Manuka Tutahi

Key Learning Moments:

Our tutors had always told us to strive for excellence and do everything with 110% effort. The amount of times we had to restart our bracket really showed the amount of effort our tutors were willing to put in for us to achieve the best we could. I feel as though the skill of teamwork has greatly improved for me personally and the ability to soak in knowledge from different people. A pukana for me was such an anxious task and I was always too shy. I was worried about being judged but I realised I was in a safe environment.(5)



(Whakaeke Practice - 2022)



(Stage Rehearsal - 2022)

Skills I have developed:

One of the best skills we were taught would have probably been learning the patu for our whakaeke. The patu was one of our main props when performing and it was really exciting to learn something new. I learnt techniques of wielding a patu whilst performing, from flicking my wrist to holding it firm and strong. Our main tutor Matua Johnny was a great help when learning these small techniques that created a much bigger impact on our overall performance. We were taught that the patu was an extension of our bodies and that it should always be held firm and strong like our Tupuna held it back in the day. (7) Our bracket greatly helped my self confidence. I had gained a sense of confidence and pride when learning about my culture.

What do I need to improve?

I think I could have tried harder at the start to open up. To have the confidence to know that I am a part of a roopu where everyone is welcome and shouldn't feel as though I am less. I feel as though I have grown into a much more mature person that doesn't need to fight for the validation of others. (5)

What life skills have I gained from this discipline?

I have gained confidence and pride. I think these life skills are important for me to have and they are very valuable. The confidence to express myself freely and not be shunned by others, as well as the pride for my culture where I am able to teach and pass down knowledge that I have learnt to future generations. This overall experience has taught me that it is good to try new things and get out of your comfort zone. Te Ao Haka is a great subject that challenges you to better yourself in Te Ao Maori whilst also keeping it fun and relevant. My knowledge of haka is much broader and my tutors did give us wise words. "Be prepared for everything and nothing at the same time". I have learnt not to limit myself and fully accept my place in the maori world. Although i'm not the best performer, I will continue to try my best. (6)

