

Mātauranga Māori in the Writing Process

A significant whakataukī

A key process in [English](#) that ākonga need to understand and feel comfortable with is the writing process. This whakataukī may help to support this.

Mai i te kore, ki te pō, ki te ao mārama

Out of nothingness, into the darkness, into the world of light

This whakataukī speaks to the mātauranga of the creation of the world in te ao Māori. It is also a powerful way to visualise and understand the writing process.

Embedding mātauranga Māori into writing

Giving mana ōrite mo te mātauranga Māori is more than incorporating Māori text creators into our programmes.

In ao Māori, rich words and images (such as those used in whakataukī) are used in stories and narratives that convey phenomena. This use of wording and imagery helps to share and maintain knowledge through generations.

While text and author selection is important, incorporating mātauranga into the way we view English practice and pedagogies is also vital. One way to do that is to use whakataukī, whakatauākī, and tongikura to support our understanding of processes in our Learning Area.

Unpacking this whakataukī

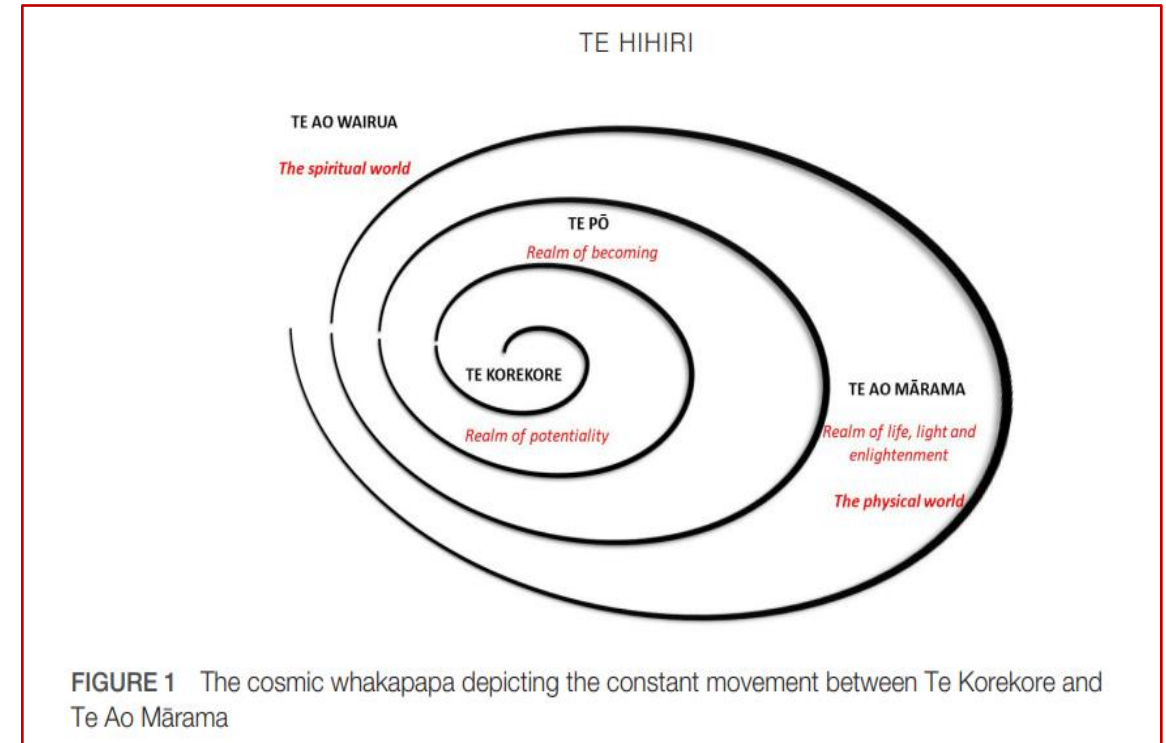
As in many cultures, life begins with a narrative of creation. Although the separation of Ranginui and Papatūānuku is seen to be the origin of life, it is the understanding of Te Kore, Te Pō, and Te Ao Mārama where there is value in our writing process.

- Te Kore is understood as the great nothingness, the void of unlimited potential
- Te Pō is understood as aeons of darkness and night. Although it is still without light, within this darkness come moments of movement — the conscious stirring of being, the beginnings of a change towards the realm of becoming
- Finally, Te Ao Mārama is understood as the world of light and enlightenment where there is now conscious awareness and the acquisition of knowledge.

Embedding mātauranga Māori into writing

This whakataukī is represented in Dr Amber Nicholson's diagram of the Māori cosmological whakapapa. She says, "The diagram presents the constant movement between the creative potential (Te Korekore), the realm of becoming (Te Pō) and the world of being (Te Ao Mārama)."

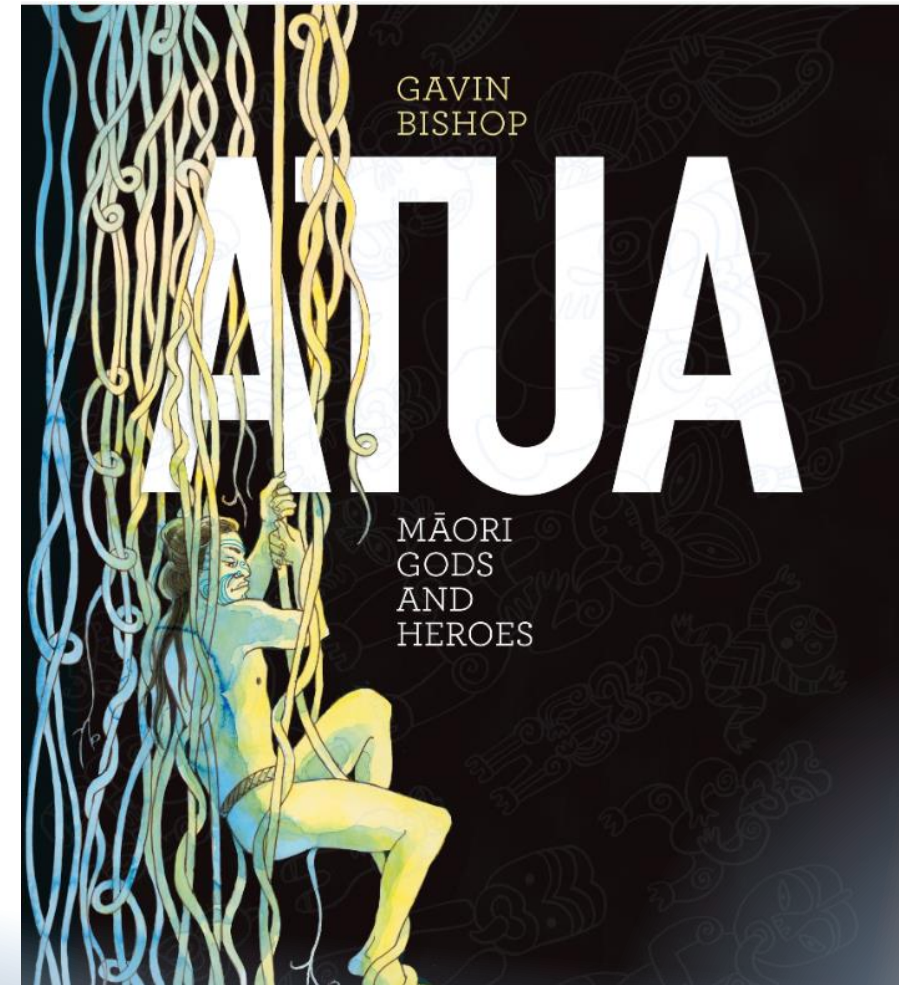
Using this to describe the writing process may help ākonga to understand a new way to view it.



Source: [Te Hihiri: A process of coming to know | MAI Journal](#)

Atua

Gavin Bishop's book *ATUA* explores the creation visually as well as in writing. This provides another way to consider the mātauranga Māori about creation and creativity.



Te Kore

We can think of Te Kore as a place of possibility, a place like the moment before we breathe in.

Nicholson refers to it as a '*place of pure potentiality*'.

This part holds all the elements that we might need to get ready to write. It may occur before we ever think of writing — it might be the play, the experiences, the reading we do before we ever decide to write about those things.



Te Pō

Te Pō is the place where things start to happen, but often it is very dark and still unclear what is happening. This may last a long time.

This is the ‘*realm of becoming*’ (Nicholson).

This part holds the messy middle of writing, the drafting and redrafting. At times it may feel difficult and arduous, but as Bishop says, “*something is about to happen*”.



Te Ao

Te Ao, or Te Ao Mārama is the place of light and understanding. Nicholson describes it as *‘the world of being.’*

This is where a clear piece of writing emerges and we feel as though we have understanding and clarity about what we are doing. It may not be finished yet, but it has a shape and direction.



Sharing this view of the writing process

Sharing this whakataukī and visualisation can help help our ākonga to understand the writing process through mātauranga Māori. As well as this, it can support them to understand the learning experiences that the classroom offers, can enrich them, and deepen their experience of Te Kore. They may also be supported to see that writing is never perfect in a first draft, and that practiced writers may still spend significant time in Te Pō before they ever get to Te Ao Mārama.

Using mātauranga Māori in this way may help young writers to understand that Te Kore and Te Pō inform and are informed by Te Ao Mārama, and to see the cyclical development and growth of writing.

Seeing mātauranga Māori in the writing process

Māori cosmological whakapapa	What this might "look like" for students in the writing process
Te Kore	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Reading• Viewing• Remembering• 'Wallowing' in text• Filling their kete• Discussing• Exploring• Setting up rules and guidelines
Te Pō	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Drafting• Talking• Seeking feedback• Asking questions• 'Starting over'• Playing
Te Ao Mārama	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking control over the process• 'Getting it' or an 'aha' moment• Giving or interpreting feedback for themselves• Reflecting• Publishing



We **shape** an **education** system that delivers
equitable and **excellent outcomes**

He mea **tārai** e mātou te **mātauranga**
kia **rangatira** ai, kia **mana taurite** ai ōna **huanga**

temahau.govt.nz

education.govt.nz



**Te Tāhuhu o
te Mātauranga**
Ministry of Education



**Te Kāwanatanga
o Aotearoa**
New Zealand Government