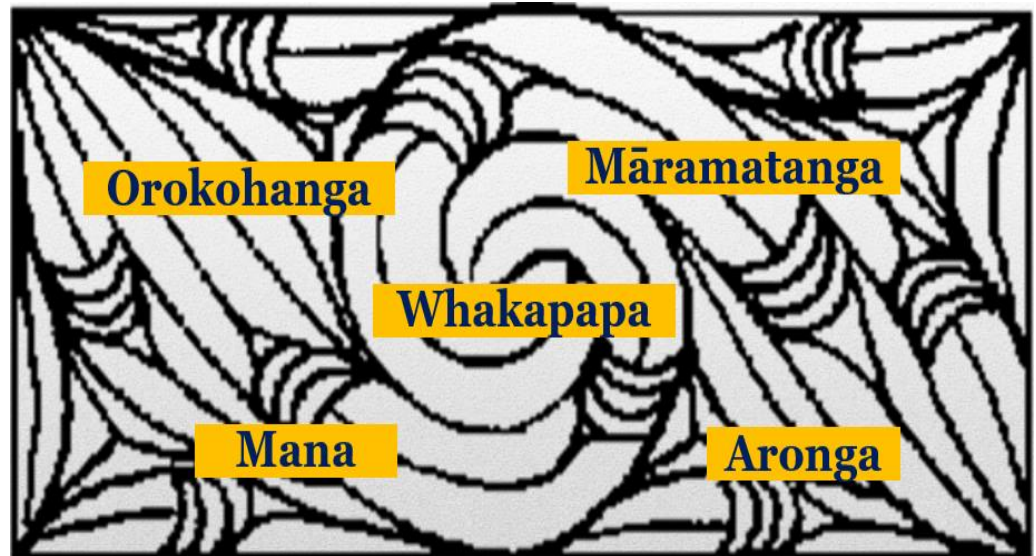


# RAURU WHAKARARE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK



## Learning Module

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# RAURU WHAKARARE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK

## EVALUATING INFORMATION SOURCES

When we consider that we are operating in an information environment where anyone can write and post anything they want, carefully considering your information source selection becomes very important.

We have observed that students, and others, tend to select and use a source because it says what they need it to i.e they focus on content over quality. They also may not consider the context within which the information is created, who the intended audience is, or what bias the author may bring to the information they create and messages they send.

I often say to students, “if there is no author and no date on a source, why would you use it?” You have no idea when it was created or who created it, and so can't determine its credibility.

To evaluate sources effectively, you need to consider a number of factors. Not every source will meet all of the quality indicators, so we need to think about what's important in your information search contexts. There are a number of source evaluation checklists on the internet that ask you to consider a range of factors when selecting a source ( for example, The Virtual Salt Evalu8it Website evaluation checklist).

We have developed the Rauru Whakarare Evaluation Framework to provide you with a holistic Māori-informed view of information evaluation as you find and select information for a range of purposes.

You can apply this framework to any information sources you find online or from any context where information is kept.

## OROKOHANGA

### 'The Origins'

The source of the information:

- ✘ When was the source published/created?
- ✘ Where has it come from?

The currency can be measured in two ways:

1. The date—how recently was the information created.
2. The value to the discipline/profession—some older sources are relevant today because of their contribution to our understanding of a topic or issue.

Orokoanga considers where the information has come from and who the authors/publishers of the source are.



## WHAKAPAPA

### 'The Background'

The background of the information:

- ✘ Why was the source created and for whom?
- ✘ What is the context of the information in the source?
- ✘ Has the information been peer-reviewed?
- ✘ What kind of geographical coverage is there?
- ✘ Are there references for the source? Is other research referred to and cited?
- ✘ Are there any other types of evidence to support arguments or assertions?

Whakapapa identifies and connects the various layers identified in this framework you should consider when evaluating sources.



## MANA

### 'The Authority'

The authority of the information:

- ✘ Who are the authors? Are their credentials listed?
- ✘ Is it a reputable organisation/ website/ publication?
- ✘ Does it have accurate grammar and language?

Mana as a term refers to status and standing within a community or organisation. This is vital when considering whether to use a particular source. It connects strongly to the author's expertise and reputation.



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## MĀRAMATANGA

### 'The Content'

The content and usability of the information:

- ✘ Is the topic covered in depth and represented by balanced arguments?
- ✘ Is the information easy to navigate and understand?
- ✘ Does this resource help you understand your topic?
- ✘ Do you feel it adds meaning and insight to your research?

Māramatanga indicates enlightenment which means that the source should positively impact the wider community of understanding and add value to the existing conversations within a particular topic area.



## ARONGA

### 'The Lens'

The lens or objectivity of the information:

- ✘ Is the resource biased or objective?
- ✘ Has the author acknowledged any weaknesses or stated their assumptions?
- ✘ Does the source consider the perspectives of the author and the reader in an unbiased manner?

Aronga identifies the focus and purpose of the information. It can be influenced by the author/organisation/publisher's viewpoints and considers whether they are well known for doing this kind of research or work.

## RAURU WHAKARARE CONCEPTS EXPLAINED

Whakapapa	<p><b>Whakapapa</b> – it captures the pedigree of the course and how it connects to the topics and all other sources you are selecting.</p> <p>Ask yourself:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✦ <i>Why was the source created and who was it created for?</i> Consider the intended audience for the information and what knowledge they are assumed to have of the topic, and also their background and expertise.</li> <li>✦ <i>What is the context of the information in the source?</i> Consider the community or country the information comes from. For example, government information could be created by the government, with the government or about the government. Each of these perspectives need to be considered.</li> <li>✦ <i>Has the information been peer-reviewed?</i> This means has it been judged as acceptable by a panel of peers who have the expertise and authority to do this. Journal articles, for example, are usually peer-reviewed. This doesn't necessarily mean that the reviewers agree with the findings of the research. It just means they agree the research was robust and the findings are supported by evidence. Remember that research is often debatable –look at the evidence and arguments provided and decide whether you accept the findings or not.</li> <li>✦ <i>What kind of geographical coverage is there?</i> This connects to the location of the information or research. How relevant is information produced in the US relevant to us here in Aotearoa NZ? Our social and cultural contexts are quite different, so some aspects may be relevant, but others may not.</li> <li>✦ <i>Are there references for the source? Is other research referred to and cited? What is the quality of the research being cited?</i> Your ability to judge this will improve the more you read and engage with different source types. Consider an article on how TV and game violence affects children, where the main evidence is the author self-citing his own research. This doesn't mean the research is not good, but awareness of this means you have considered it when selecting the source to use for your purposes.</li> <li>✦ <i>Are there any other types evidence to support arguments or assertions?</i> Not all information you access is academic research –you may need to find quality professional sources as well to support your understanding of your topic. Some non-academic sources will cite references, others won't. Look to see whether the author is providing robust arguments, supported by good examples, and then connect to the credibility of the author to determine whether you are persuaded by their evidence.</li> </ul> <p>If you consider these questions about your sources, you can determine the background of the source and make an informed decision about whether to use it or not.</p>
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Orokohanga

**Orokohanga** – asks you to consider the origin of the source. It had to come from somewhere.

Ask yourself:

- ✦ *When was the source published/created? Can you find a date or year of publication, perhaps in the copyright information?* On a webpage, you may have to make a couple of extra clicks to an ‘about’ page which may give more information on the organization or author of the information, and you may find information about the organisations values and goals as well. This will help you determine their reason they created the information.
- ✦ *Where has it come from?* One of the challenges in electronic access is people often say ‘I got it online’. But this refers to where it was accessed, rather than where it was created. You can determine if the information is from a personal or organisational website, a newspaper, trade magazine, blog, database etc. Try to avoid just saying online and dig a little deeper to find the type of source it is.

The currency of information is also an important consideration. We want to make sure that we are accessing and engaging with the most recent research or conversations about a particular topic.

The **currency** can be measured in two ways:

- ✦ **Date:** *How recently was the information created?* For up-to-date information, we would be looking for information in the past 10 years. Consider that a book or journal article can take up to three years after the research was done to be produced. Conference papers tend to be more recent as they are faster to publish, but may not have been through the same robust process of peer-review. Organisations also should be keeping their websites up-to-date. If a website hasn’t been updated since 2010, you would need to consider how relevant the information still is.
- ✦ **Value to the discipline or profession:** *Is this source still relevant for the topic?* Some older sources are still relevant today because of their contribution to our understanding of a topic or issue. An example of this is a source used in an Environmental Planning programme at Massey. It is a 1969 paper on Arnstein’s Ladder of Public Participation – Arnstein’s framework is still being used today. Another apt example or New Zealand is the Te Tiriti o Waitangi and its relevance and importance today. It is important to recognise the importance of ‘seminal’ texts, those historical or older documents that have helped shaped our understanding of certain concepts or topics.

**Mana**

**Mana** connects to the credibility or standing within community of the author or organisation. You need to ask yourself *‘why should I believe and trust in the views, values and ideal of the person or organisation who created this information?’*

Ask yourself:

- ✦ *Who are the authors? Are their credentials listed?* Consider whether the authors are known in the field or profession. A good example for credibility is former All Blacks captain Richie McCaw. During and post-rugby, he is popping up in several adverts – Adidas, Versatile Homes, Fonterra Milk in Schools and more recently in turmeric "Sports Complex" supplement advert with his wife Gemma. Research suggest that celebrities in advertising must be considered trustworthy, expert, respectable and similar to the target market – this is where their credibility comes from. Look for the credibility any author brings to the information they create or share.
- ✦ *Does the information come from a reputable organisation/ website or publication?* In the academic context, you can consider whether the information has been published well-known journal rather than on online journal that doesn't have the same credibility. When looking at blogs or websites, some are personal, while others have been created by professionals or experts in the field to provide key information on best practice determined through research and experience.
- ✦ *Is the information presented controversial or objective? Does it provide a good match with your existing and expanding knowledge?* Much information is created to help persuade the audience to consider alternative positions or to take sides in a debate. The mana of the source is essential as there are usually two perspectives on most controversial issues.
- ✦ *Is the information presented with accurate grammar and language? Does it avoid discrimination by using inclusive language and unbiased images? Does it tell you ‘this is truth’ or does it suggest ‘this might be truth and here is the evidence why’, and then let you, as the audience, make up your mind?* Accuracy in language and information is a useful quality indicator.

Once you determine the mana of a source and find the author or organisation trustworthy, you are likely to consult information from these sources again and build your arsenal of reputable and credible information sources.

**Māramatanga**

**Māramatanga** means enlightenment. This means that the source should positively impact the wider community of understanding and add value to the existing conversations within a particular topic area. It connects to understanding, usability and relevance of your information source. You may come across information that has quality Whakapapa, Orokohanga and Mana, but you need to consider whether it closely relates to your information need – for example, the topic of your project or assignment.

Māramatanga asks you to consider the appropriateness of your information for your purpose, audience and context.

Ask yourself:

- ✦ *Is the topic covered in depth and represented by balanced arguments?* Be aware of deliberately biased information that only tells half the story or omits key facts or evidence that may undermine the arguments or positions presented.
- ✦ *Is the information easy to navigate and understand?* Good information is usually logically organised and links between sections or ideas are easy to navigate. If you are confused after reading or listening to it, and the information in different sections tends to contradict each other, then perhaps consider whether the information source meets your needs.
- ✦ *Does this resource help you understand your topic?* Good information will leave you with more answers than questions.
- ✦ *Does the source link you to other quality information?* In academic journal articles, and some other source types, the reference list provides you access to previous research that supports the current author’s claims. If you find a quote or paragraph you want to use that cites someone else, it is useful to find the original source of the idea to make sure the current author has cited that source accurately. Remember that citation is only one author’s interpretation of the ideas of another.
- ✦ *Do you feel it adds meaning and insight to your research or understanding of the topic?* If you are reading the same thing in multiple sources, then this suggests everyone is on the same wavelength. But then you might come across a new perspective or approach, somewhat more innovative than the other information. If the Whakapapa, Orokohanga, and Mana are good, then these kinds of information sources are worth exploring further.

We often find and select things that match our existing understanding or perspectives and our search engine algorithms are actually making this more likely by matching our searches to preferences they believe we hold. But we need to explore alternatives and seek our new ideas and perspectives. This leads us to enlightenment and the ability to consider a range of perspectives on a topic or issue and not just our own existing ones.

Aronga

**Aronga** connects to ‘perspective’ or ‘direction’ and refers to the lens you apply when looking at information sources. It also means considering the lens of the information creator and what this means for the Mana of the source. Aronga connects how you consider inherent biases, or strengths and weaknesses, in an information source.

Ask yourself:

- ✦ *What is the purpose of the information and why its been written or created the way it has? Who is the information created for? Are the intentions or purpose of the information clear?* Students often struggle to read journal articles and with very good reason. They are not written for them. There is a standard structural format that journal articles follow and they assume that the reader is familiar with the theories and ways of knowing of the discipline. Similarly, information created within organisations may assume that the audience has a good understanding or business or technical expertise, and so include jargon that will be unfamiliar to audiences who lack this expertise.
- ✦ *Is there any potential bias in the information?* Bias becomes evident when you critically evaluate the information for evidence of claims and the words chosen to present the information. Consider information on climate change produced by National, Labour or the Green Party in NZ – you will get very different viewpoints on whether climate change initiatives focus on economy, environment or equity. This depends on the perspectives of the information creators, particularly climate change deniers. Even selecting to use the term ‘climate change deniers’ indicates that I believe climate change is a very real concern.
- ✦ *Could the research funding body lead to subjective reporting of results? Could the sponsorship or funding providers views and values negatively influence the findings of the research?* If a company funds research and the findings are unfavourable, the company has the right to embargo the research, which mean the findings cannot be released to the public for a stated amount of time. Highly sensitive research may also be embargoed so the results are not made public. From an organisational perspective, think again how having Richie McCaw as a spokesperson for Fonterra ads provides mana – Fonterra’s reputation is reasonable, but they have certainly had their share of negative media over controversial issues such as milk powder contamination or high profits for stakeholders while milk and dairy products are costly for the average kiwi. So what bias would be consider to be present in milk-related research sponsored by Fonterra? They seem the most likely source of research funding for this kind of research, but does this influence the findings? Hard to tell, but definitely worth considering.
- ✦ *Does the information recognise alternative viewpoints?* We will almost always push our personal agendas in the information we create. Even if we acknowledge the other side of the debate, the structure of the information will always emphasise our perspective and select evidence that supports this. So really, there is no such thing as unbiased information. Consider whether the author identifies any weaknesses in their methods, any limitations on the scope or context of the information and where it was created and any assumptions the author believes to be true and therefore which support the conclusions drawn or advice given. We know that much published research has a Euro- or US-centric view of the world, often accompanied by Caucasian perspectives. I encourage you to recognise the dominant voices and seek the minority or indigenous voices in any conversations about a topic or issue. You will easily be persuaded by information that is written well using some of the persuasive techniques – appeals to logic, emotion or ethics.

Aronga is your ability to recognise the information creators bias and perpsectives, and to also determine whether they are open to considering a topic or issue through a different lens or to recongised the validity of other perspectives, even if they don’t agree with them.