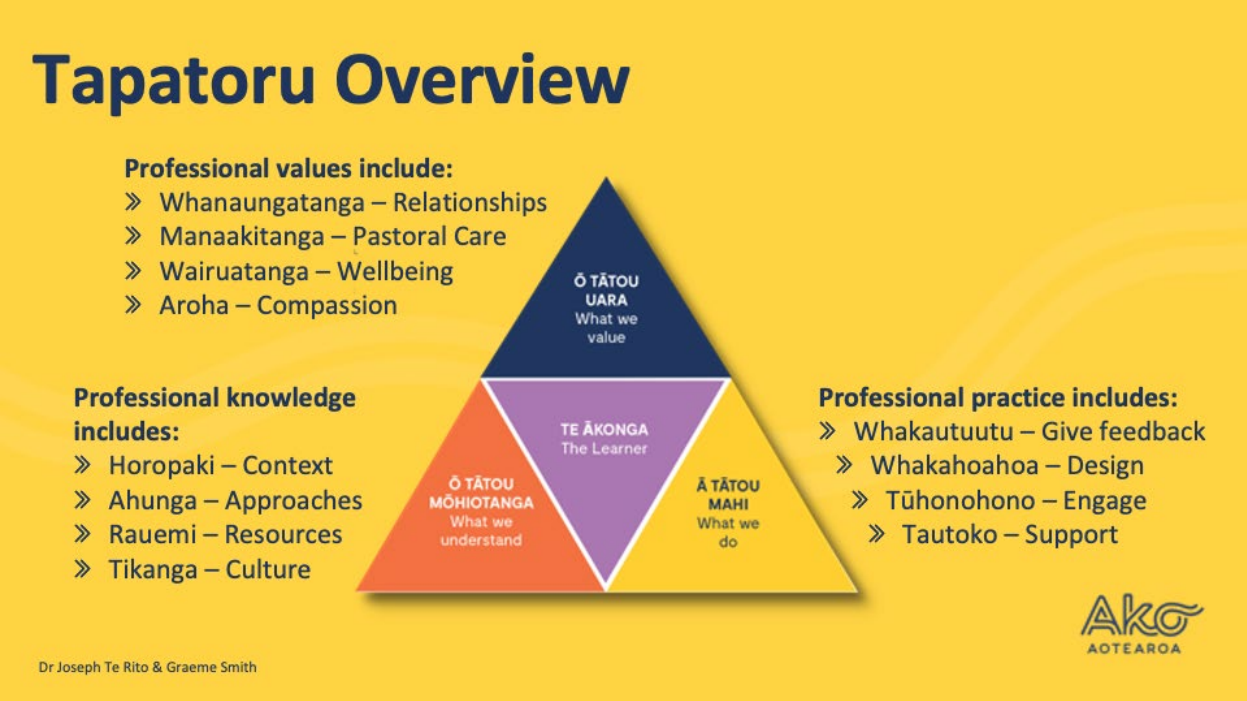
Tapatoru – A Professional Standards Framework for Foundation Learning Practitioners



The Tapatoru is a professional standards framework created by Ako Aotearoa, encompassing adult literacy, numeracy and cultural capability.

Ako Aotearoa has been working with providers including Wānanga, ITPs, ITOs, GTOs and PTEs to trial the framework which was launched in December 2018.

The Tapatoru is designed to continue the work of professionalising the foundation education workforce across the diverse range of contexts funded by the TEC.

“Aside from addressing issues of variable performance in graduate outcomes from entry-level adult teaching qualifications, the Tapatoru will help ensure the continued professional development of the foundation education workforce,” says Ako Aotearoa Professional Learning and Development Consultant Graeme Smith.

“This workforce is diverse and includes learning support staff and others involved in pastoral care, careers, administration and management as well as kaiako, tutors, trainers and educators.

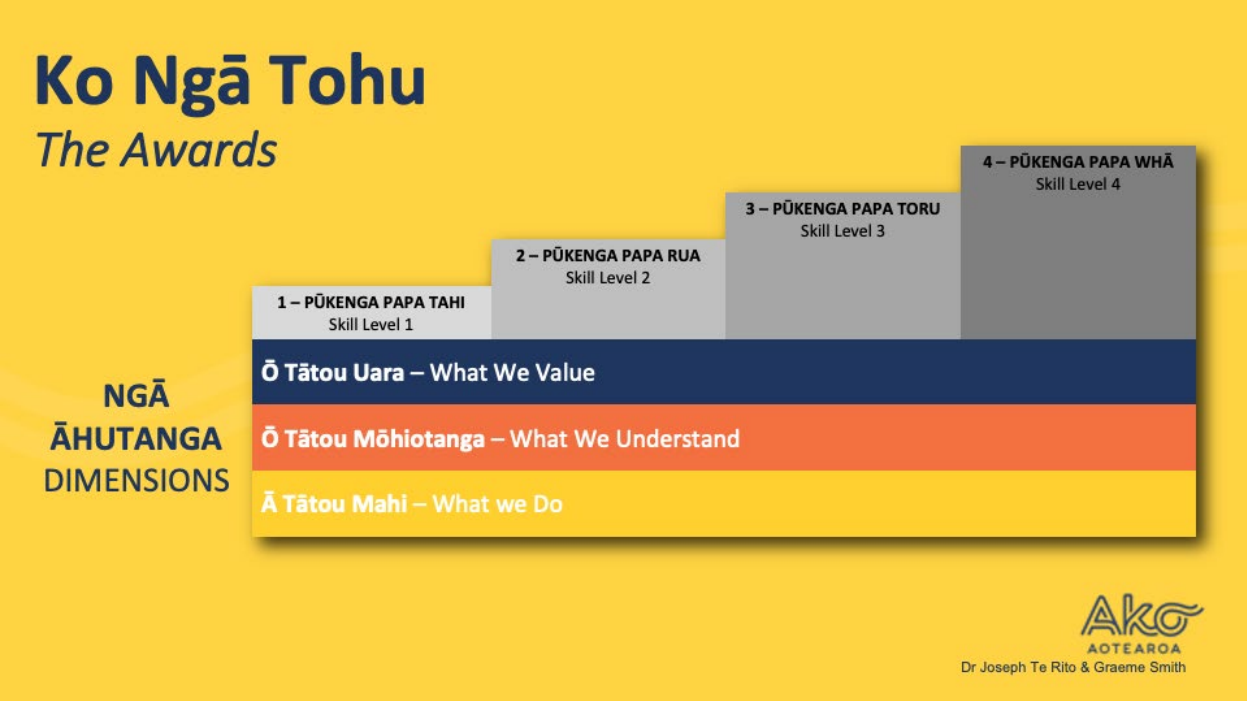
The Tapatoru also seeks to address areas of provision that have been historically underserved by professional development in this sector.

Our scope also includes those working outside of traditional educational institutions so it’s appropriate for workplaces, marae, community groups and other settings.

We believe that the key benefit for the TEC – and all of us – over time, however, will be a more robust measure of confidence in foundation learning providers with regards to the professional competence of their staff.”

The standards add a new layer to the foundation-focused capability building infrastructure that New Zealand has been investing in since 2007.

The Tapatoru draws on a body of work recognising the value of strengthening adult literacy and numeracy teaching skills and cultural capability for those working with Māori, Pacific and other learners.

While the current focus has been on recognising and strengthening capability in the foundation learning sector, Ako Aotearoa is also looking at exploring whether the Tapatoru framework could be adapted to other sectors.

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