



AUT SPORTS PERFORMANCE  
RESEARCH INSTITUTE NEW ZEALAND



## Action Learning Action Research Association

**11th Action Learning Action Research and 15th Participatory Action Research  
World Congress**

**September 2025**

**Putting Global Collaboration at the Heart of Action Research**

### PRESENTATION ABSTRACT

**Kaukau A (2025) Braiding Knowledge Streams: Applying He Awa Whiria through Participatory Action Research to Support Bicultural Physical Education in English Medium Schools**

Recent curriculum developments have highlighted the need for more authentic approaches to bicultural education in Aotearoa. Yet in English medium schools, Physical Education (PE) continues to grapple with the challenge of indigenising and decolonising practice. Too often, biculturalism is reduced to symbolic inclusion, failing to shift the underlying colonial structures that shape curriculum design and teaching. This presentation outlines a PhD project that investigates how a braided research methodology can support teachers and knowledge holders to work ethically across Māori and Western knowledge systems in PE.

Guided by He Awa Whiria (Macfarlane et al., 2022), the research draws on Kaupapa Māori theory, Critical Theory, and Participatory Action Research (PAR). In Phase One, wānanga and interviews with mātauranga Māori knowledge leaders informed the design of a flexible pedagogical tool. In Phase Two, two PAR cycles were carried out with teachers in English medium schools who engaged with, trialled, and adapted the tool through iterative cycles of action, reflection, and collective inquiry.

This presentation will not report formal findings, as the PhD remains in progress. Instead, it will focus on the methodological and relational learning that has emerged through the braided approach. Attention will be given to the role of whanaungatanga, dialogic practice, and epistemological tension in supporting teacher learning. Early insights suggest that positioning mātauranga Māori as a pedagogical anchor, rather than an add-on, holds significant potential for disrupting tokenism and fostering Tiriti-honouring, transformative curriculum practice in Physical Education. It highlights the importance of relational processes, ethical responsiveness, and collective inquiry found in PAR methodologies for those seeking to engage in deep, systemic curriculum change in Aotearoa.

**To be presented:** In person in Auckland