

Maramataka ki te Tiri o Te Moana (Maramataka in Antarctica).: A Conceptual Maramataka in the Southwestern Ross Sea Region of Antarctica

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Abstract : Maramataka is an ancestral lunar environmental knowledge system based on environmental tohu (signs, observations or indicators), that continues to impart maatauranga (knowledge) to tangata whenua, people of the land after thousands of years. Maramataka is the mauri (energy) flow between whenua (land), moana (water) and rangi (sky), experienced through tiroiti (observing), connecting and attuning to the natural environment. Tohu serve as guidance to practises of kaiawhina (protection) a key value driving Aotearoa New Zealand led research in Antarctica. Recent developments recognise the importance of including and integrating indigenous knowledge and perspectives such as maatauranga Maaori which can provide insights into the conservation of Antarctica. We use an ancient kaupapa Maaori framework of weaving, wayfinding and attunement to navigate complexities using Hautu Waka. We investigate and weave together learnings from Antarctic and western science and indigenous Maaori maatauranga and tohu of moana, whenua and rangi to provide an indigenous perspective of Antarctica taiao and Maramataka. Drawing on past and present knowledge of environmental calendars contained in maatauranga Maaori and paleoclimate knowledge bases, field observations, interviews and whakataukii (proverbs), we aim to provide a conceptual Maramataka of the southwestern Ross Sea region and area of Antarctica. A key area of interest are the tohu related to the marama which are connected to all three interweaving spheres of moana, rangi, whenua. Maatauranga Maramataka in Aotearoa has been developed over millennia and we acknowledge the mana and sacredness of this tupuna knowledge and that this conceptual Maramataka serves as the starting point of a journey to shine light on indigenous perspectives using Maaori methods and frameworks in a dominant western science paradigm.

Keywords : Maramataka, Antarctica, Aotearoa, Maaori, tohu, moon, lunar calendar

Conference Title : ICIEI 2024 : International Conference on Inclusive Education and Integration

Conference Location : Cancun, Mexico

Conference Dates : April 04-05, 2024