

KAUPAPA MĀORI AND A NEW CURRICULUM IN AOTEAROA/NEW ZEALAND

Lex CHALMERS¹, Angeline GREENSILL¹

ABSTRACT

Bi-culturalism² is an important issue in debates about educational policy and implementing a new curriculum in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This paper explores how the development of the 2007 curriculum in Aotearoa/New Zealand attempted to address curriculum, teaching and learning options for Māori. Māori are a significant national community with needs and aspirations in education. Māori have *tangata whenua* status in Aotearoa/New Zealand, where this term acknowledges the arrival and settlement of migrant people of the Pacific centuries prior to significant European colonization in the 19th Century. While progress has been made in Māori education since the significant Treaty of Waitangi Act in 1975, we wish to explore the potential of *Kaupapa Māori* (Māori practice) in the development of a new curriculum, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*.

While geographical education is our focus in this paper, the broader colonial history of education is the backdrop against which we first view the principles of Māori geographies in education. The essay underscores the importance of ‘authenticity’, the participation of local communities and local studies connected to local environments and histories. We use an educational program of the Raglan Area School on Whaingaroa Harbour as an illustrative example. The geographies of Whaingaroa Harbour provide an exemplary context for programs in geographical education and we suggest that the new curriculum in both English and *Te Reo Māori* (Māori language) can enhance the movement towards bi-cultural education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Our argument is that the 2007 curriculum creates the opportunity; the impediments lie in providing appropriate resources and developing community support for the delivery of the bicultural educational approaches.

Keywords: Curriculum Review, Local Food, Environment, Bi-cultural education

1. INTRODUCTION

Even in a small country like Aotearoa/New Zealand³, the development of a new national curriculum is a major undertaking. New curriculums never start from scratch, however, often building on teaching and learning goals, structures and content of previous versions. Generally, the processes of critique of the existing curriculum, new curriculum proposal, consultation, compromise, confirmation and implementation are staged over a number of years, with both sectional interests and broader societal groups contributing to the debates. The New Zealand National Curriculum (2007) project began in the late 1980s, with the final steps of implementation to begin in 2011. Throughout the process, what we teach in Geography has been modified, but there remain recognisable links back to the key documentation that emerged first after the 1974 curriculum work in Geography (Chalmers, 2005).

National curriculums like those of Aotearoa/New Zealand’s are generally found in what is described as the compulsory education sector, with this sector conventionally divided into primary and secondary education. Primary and secondary school curriculums first became nationally mandated in the second half of the 19th Century, with many nation states requiring young people to participate in education formally for between 10 and 12 years, generally from age 5 or 6. In the case of Aotearoa/New Zealand, this time is approximately 11 years⁴. These eleven years of national education should offer

¹ Waikato University, Department of Geography, New Zealand, lex@waikato.ac.nz ngahina@waikato.ac.nz

² While there are many cultures in Aotearoa/New Zealand, the status of the first settlers (Māori) is recognised in the importance of the Treaty of Waitangi (1840), the *tangata whenua* (“people of standing”) status accorded Māori, and the formal recognition of *Te Reo Māori* (Māori language) as an official language. It is in this sense that we use the term bi-cultural rather than multi-cultural in this paper.

³ Throughout this paper we adopt the nomenclature of Aotearoa/New Zealand to underscore the importance of bi-culturalism in our approach to education. Where citations are used, we use the form adopted in the original statement or document. We also use *te reo Māori* (Māori language) where appropriate, italicising the text and offering a brief translation into English where the term is first used.

⁴ Compulsory education is divided into primary, intermediate and secondary schooling. Primary schools cater for students from the age of five year to the end of year 6 (usually age 10). Students in years 7 and 8 (age 11 - 12) may be in a separate intermediate school or part of a primary, secondary or composite/area school. Secondary schools provide for students from year 9 (age 13) until the end of year 13 (age 17).

opportunities to the widest range of learners, and we have argued previously ⁵ that the interests of Māori learners can be accommodated.

The current curriculum cycle was initiated in the late 1980s when it became clear that teaching and learning could no longer be managed through multiple syllabus statements with varied generation dates and formats, and that a once-in-a-generation and comprehensive transformation was required. The case of Geography illustrates the issues faced by the (then) Department of Education. The subject had been taught in the senior secondary school (years 11-13) alongside History since 1945. Geography was offered as a discrete subject only in the final three years of secondary education (years 11-13), with geography content in years 1-10 offered in a social studies curriculum. Geography was examined as a canon subject in external exit examinations (year 13) that led to tertiary study, while social studies as a subject was not available at the same level. Geography teachers had come together in the early 1970s, with support from the government and devised a comprehensive syllabus for years 11-13, but this syllabus (along with many others) was not explicitly related to a national curriculum.

Public consultation on the national curriculum began in the 1980s, but the Department of Education got no further than a draft document, published as *National Curriculum Statement: A Discussion Document for Primary and Secondary Schools (Draft)* in 1988, before being effectively sidelined by state driven restructuring in 1989 and by a change of government in 1990 (Chalmers and Keown, 1999). Renewed development began in 1991, with *The New Zealand Curriculum Framework* (Ministry of Education, 1993) appearing in 1993.

New curriculums were published initially in draft form for consultation and trialing. *Social Studies in the New Zealand Curriculum* was published by the Ministry of Education (1997), combining History Geography and Economics with Social Studies. There was a diversion, however, when the development and implementation of new statements was paused in response to widespread concern across the school sector about the pace and scale of change. New timelines for the national curriculum were announced in July 1997, introducing a transition period of at least two years between the publication of a final statement and its mandatory application.

Plans to develop the National Curriculum were appropriately moderated by interests declared by a number of parties; teachers associations were one group that became involved, along with Māori communities, and sector groups such as Industry Training Organisations and the Education Forum (2010). The process was protracted, minimally resourced, worked through a Curriculum Stock Take to produce a draft curriculum in 2006 and a final statement of the New Zealand National Curriculum (2007). As we note in the following section, the recognition of Māori interests in education was an overdue part of this process.

2. BICULTURALISM IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW ZEALAND CURRICULUM

Within the National Curriculum of 2007, there is a significant commitment to acknowledging the bi-lingual nature of Aotearoa/New Zealand (English and Māori), and a much stronger commitment overall to inclusive approaches to education. Alongside the national curriculum document, for the first time, was *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*. It was developed for Māori medium settings teaching and learning but all schools can use this document. It is not a translation of *The New Zealand Curriculum* and was developed based on Māori philosophies and principles. *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* recognizes *kaupapa Māori* after more than 150 years of opportunity denied.

Geography with its interest in people and place is a particularly appropriate discipline in which to address some of the issues of *kaupapa Māori* and environment, especially as this relationship is important to Māori. At the time of European colonial expansion into Aotearoa/New Zealand (and prior to the signing of the influential Treaty of Waitangi in 1840) the relations between *tangata whenua* (people of standing in the land) and the physical environment were well established. There have been debates about the role of Māori and the first settlers in the transformation of the physical environment (Cumberland, 1962), but equally there have been historical assessments that report the environmental

⁵ Greensill, Greensill and Chalmers (2005) first produced the material used in parts of this essay. We showed that *kaupapa Māori* (Māori systems of practice) offered productive ways of meeting the specifications of a national curriculum.

controls Māori used and the eco-sensitive principles that underscored these practices (Dieffenbaker, 1843; von Hochstetter, 1867).

As we report in Greensill *et al.* (2005), Nineteenth Century environmental ‘education’ within the Māori world also has a history. Smith and Smith (1993) make the point that before the imposition of colonial education there is evidence of a vibrant Māori *ako* (educational process or pedagogy) that insured the transmission of Māori knowledges. There were pedagogic relationships that operated between people at the *whanau* (family) and *hapu* (larger group) levels. The central issues of environmental education, those of identity and belonging, were embedded in *whakapapa* (lines of descent) that informed Māori of familial and genealogical relationships. There was no national ‘curriculum’; rather a set of principles and practices that were (and are) sensitive to living and inanimate things in a particular place, their bio-physical characteristics and *mauri* (life force).

In the 150 years of history that followed the signing of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi the biophysical landscape of Aotearoa/New Zealand was transformed from native forests and wetlands to exotic forests and pastoralism. What is just as clear is the intention of the cultural transformation engineered under the colonial educational system. The first ‘school’ for Māori children was established by the Church Mission Society in 1816, and the 1847 Education Ordinance created a national mechanism for funding missionary schools. The secular provision of education for Māori began with the Native Schools Act in 1867. The ‘civilizing’ intent of this legislation is a dominant theme in commentaries of the time (Binney, 1968), and environmental education was not a significant aspect of these programs. The New Zealand Education Act of 1877 established the principles of universal elementary education, and these are clearly derived from the metropole (explicitly the British 1870 Education Act). More than a century of colonial education followed, with little scope for *kaupapa Māori* or *te reo Māori* that underpin Māori environmental education.

A review of the Māori Affairs Department (Hunn, 1960) is recognised as an important benchmark for Māori. It raised the issue of integration of Māori, as opposed to segregation, and led to the creation of the Māori Education Foundation, and the New Zealand Māori Council. With reference to education, Hunn reported on disparities and pressed for Māori to address the imbalance in achievement by working within the national educational framework (Hunn, 1960, 17). Nearly a generation (and significant numbers of young Māori) passed through the formal education system before any mechanisms for effecting change were introduced.

In the late 1980s, approaching the 150 year celebrations of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi, the failure of colonial and assimilationist education to serve Māori children became clearer. Almost every index the *Education of Māori Children: A Review* (1971) showed that Māori children were not reaching the goals determined by the system. Section 155 of the 1989 Education Act addressed the issues when it stated that *Kura Kaupapa Māori* (immersion schools taught in *te Reo Māori*) could be established where:

- (a) The parents of at least 21 people who would, if the school were established, be entitled to free enrolment there, want there to be established a school:
 - (i) in which *te reo Māori* (the Māori language) is the principal language of instruction;
 - (ii) in which the charter of the school requires the school to operate in accordance with *Te Aho Matua* (as defined in section 155A); and
 - (iii) that has the special characteristics (if any) set out in its charter that will give the school a particular character (in this section called ‘special characteristics’); and
- (b) if a school of that type is established, students enrolled at the school will get an education of a kind not available at any other state school that children of the parents concerned can conveniently attend.

This Act may be recognised formally as a post-colonial marker; Māori had the option of creating (environmental) education that used *te reo* (the authentic voice of Māori), involved the community, and was relevant to the place in which it was offered. The subsequent emphasis on school-based curriculum (Bolstad, 2004, 10) underscored the importance of the local place, and is the key to the development of environmental education at *Te Kura a Rohe o Whaingaroa*.

3. THE PRINCIPLES OF CONTEMPORARY MĀORI EDUCATION

The principles of a resurgent Māori education are encapsulated in the principles of *Kaupapa Māori*. Paraphrasing Smith (1990, 100) the principles are driven by awareness of being Māori in a particular place, where the validity and legitimacy of Māori is taken for granted. *Kaupapa Māori* recognizes that the survival of Māori language and culture is imperative, and that efforts to achieve autonomy over Māori lives and well-being will continue. A national curriculum is seen as anathema.

Assertion of the importance of *te reo* underpinned the changes introduced in the 1989 Education Act, and this was nowhere more evident than in the pre-school *kohanga reo* (language nests) established by local Māori communities to rebuild the commitment to *kaupapa Māori*. The success of the *kohanga reo* programme was such that they were reinforced by formal schooling (*Te Kura Kaupapa Māori*) where Māori is the primary language of instruction. In 2010, there are 465 *kohanga reo*, with nearly 10,000 children attending. The majority are located in the Auckland, Far North and Bay of Plenty regions. The presence of an established *kohanga reo* and a strong Māori community in Whaingaroa has been important in the development of *Te Roopu Aroha ki te Reo*, the Māori immersion program at the Raglan Area School. Typically, the *kohanga reo* is located on tribal land, within easy reach of community gardens and both harbour and open coastal environments.

Kohanga reo are the institutional and community starting point of Māori education; the language is not just a medium of instruction, it is also the key to the transmission of values, beliefs and attitudes that underpin the culture. Subsequent education in *rumaki* (immersion), *kura kaupapa*, and *wananga* (tertiary) develop not only a different world view, but also a parallel system of delivery, especially in areas focused on raising environmental awareness. Māori recognise the world as one interconnected and interdependent whole. This holistic view provides a central focus for education in, about and for the environment. Throughout the Māori education system, learners are exposed to narratives that explain environmental relationships; these relationships link the seasons, Gods, people, animals and crops in a meaningful, holistic whole. The Māori world view fits within conventional initiatives such as EnviroSchools (2010), a funded teaching framework that encourages a classroom focus on environmental sustainability, and requires learners to make contributions to sustainable initiatives within their own communities. The EnviroSchools program is part of the teaching program at *Te Roopu Aroha ki te Reo*.

Within *Kaupapa Māori*, environmental awareness has a distinctive cosmological base that: “taken as a whole, ... provides an interesting contrast to the creation myths from other lands, for it gives an insight into the Māori world view and, in particular, to the richness in Māori thought to the personification in nature” (Reed, 2004, 2). The central elements are the roles of *Rangimui* (the sky father) and *Papatuanuku* (the Earth mother) and a pantheon of familial *atua* (gods) associated with environments and processes associated with them. Traditionally, Māori considered the Earth and the sky and everything in between to be *tapu* (sacred). To remove the *tapu* so *whenua* (land) could be used to grow food, *karakia* (prayers) and other rituals were performed routinely to make the land *noa* (common). These practices are comfortable and familiar rituals in the classroom and other learning environments of *Te Roopu Aroha ki te Reo*. In a teaching programme that uses food growing as a context, appropriate deities (Figure 1) are introduced.

<i>Atua</i> (names of Gods)	Domain	Resource interest
<i>Tangaroa</i>	the seas and waters	fisheries and fish
<i>Rongomatane</i>	kumara	cultivated crops
<i>Haumiatiketike</i>	fern roots	bush undergrowth
<i>Tane Mahuta</i>	the forests	trees and birds
<i>Tawhirimatea</i>	the elements	wind and rain
<i>Tumatauenga</i>	humankind	human exploitation

Figure 1. Nga Atua Māori: Guardians of the Environment (after Durie, 1998).

Māori children learn of *whanaungatanga*, the inter-relatedness of all things through a process of reciprocal and respectful awareness between people and the flora and fauna of the natural world. For example, in the garden we describe below, *karakia* are used at planting to insure a productive return and to give thanks for bountiful crops. *Karakia* are also used to maintain balance within the immediate environment. Failure of crops may be attributed to a breach of *tikanga* (protocol), possible interference with *ira* (gene-stock) or *kakano* (seeds). These practices are embedded in *kaitiakitanga* (the practice of environmental guardianship) that ensures the maintenance of *mauri* (life force of plants and other things in the environment) in a condition that insures the sustainable existence of future generations. These concepts are introduced and reinforced during the environmental education programs in *te kura kaupapa Māori* (schools using Māori language and culture as the medium for teaching and learning).

We present this detail and cover these points for a different purpose from that of Greensill, Greensill and Chalmers (2008). We will argue in the final section of this essay, that *kaupapa Māori* is seen as a real alternative for bi-cultural education at the national level, and that language and culture are well articulated in local geographies. We feel there are lessons that could be learned by those with responsibility for (compulsory) education in many national jurisdictions, and that language is the key.

4. A PROGRAMME OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

Local knowledge about, and understanding of, environment is particularly important in *kaupapa Māori*, and awareness of this has informed our choice of illustrative material in the following section. We focus on both pre-school and formal education at *Te Kura o te Rohe o Whaingaroa*, the Raglan Area School. Raglan is a small (just over 2600 people in the 2006 Census) town on the west coast of the North Island of New Zealand. Nearly 30% of the population self identified as Māori in the 2006 Census, and the importance of local *hapu* in the history and community development is well documented (Chalmers and Greensill, 2006).

The Whaingaroa *kohanga reo* is the pre-school starting point for education in Māori language and culture. The building and support services have a capacity to cater for 25 pre-school children with 20 in regular attendance at the end of 2009. The site, at Te Kopua, the tribal land of Tainui hapu, is attractive, close to the Whaingaroa harbour and coast, with spectacular scenery, but sheltered from the prevailing westerly wind. The *kohanga reo* fits in well with other buildings on the *marae*, and offers a range of teaching and learning opportunities for both the children and their parents. One of the most striking features is the large murals that place the *kohanga* in its natural and cultural environment (Figure 2). Pre-school children at the *kohanga* spend a significant amount of time outside, gaining first-hand experience and knowledge of both natural and cultural environments.



Figure 2. *Te Kohanga Reo* has murals of *Te Whaanga* (Whale Bay) and *Whaingaroa* (top left). Teaching space is multi-functional, with a kitchen. Posters are in *te reo*.

The town has an ‘area’ school, *Te Kura a Robe o Whaingaroa* that caters for about 460 students in year 1 to year 13. The full time teaching equivalent is about 34. *Te Roopu Aroha ki te Reo*, a Māori language unit was established at Raglan Area School in 1989 with approximately 20 children in years 1-4. Because few students spoke *te reo* at the outset, Māori was spoken in the afternoons only. In 1992, when numbers justified a *rumaki* (Māori language immersion program) for year 1 to year 8 classes, a new teacher was appointed, and local support led to another appointment and a designated space in 1994. A joint community-Ministry of Education facility, *Te Puawaitanga*, was built in 2002. The number of learners in year 1 to year 12 programs now exceeds 80 with a teaching staff of four. The unit is adjacent to the main school buildings. In many respects this development mirrors that developing in other places with well articulated community support for Māori language and cultural education.

5. LEARNING IN, WITH AND FOR THE ENVIRONMENT AT WHAINGAROA

While *te Roopu Aroha ki te Reo* is staffed by the equivalent of four full time teachers, environment education is designed and implemented as part of a cross curriculum programme. The focus is on year 5-7 (10-12 year old) learners who experience a broad curriculum across the seven essential learning areas identified in the 1993 New Zealand Curriculum statement. Across the curriculum, and across the Unit, the language of instruction is Māori, but the learners are clearly bilingual and capable of receiving instruction and responding in both English and Māori.

The room of *te Roopu Aroha ki te Reo* is light, with colourful and extensive graphics in *te reo*. Figure 3, for example, shows one of 30 images documenting lunar planting calendars for food production and harvesting. The lessons meet authenticity criteria in a number of ways; they are expressed in *te reo*, relate to the local place in terms of plant and animal species, and deliver key (curriculum) competencies⁶ (Ministry of Education, 2007, 11). Even more important, they have the support of the local Māori community and they have practical application outside the classroom. Working with the environment creates opportunities for experiential learning which builds understanding of the local space and place.

The practical work involves activities on tribal land within walking distance of the school. The focus is food production and harvesting of staple crops like *kanga*, (maize) *rivai* (potatoes) *kamokamo* (marrow) and *kumara* (sweet potatoes). Crops are grown using traditional methods to produce *kai atua* (chemical and additive free food) in *te mara Māori* (Māori community garden) of about 2000sq metres. The teacher draws on community support, most notably a *kaumatua* (respected elder) with many years of experience in the local environment. The *kaumatua* both demonstrates and teaches good practice in the garden (Figure 4). When plants with limited food value but medicinal benefits are encountered, these are drawn to the attention of the young gardeners.

In 2006, a practical problem arose at the garden and became the focus of a classroom activity. One week after a planting session and some practical teaching, the learners returned to the garden to find that their good work had been undone by the visit of a number of grubbing swamp birds *te pukeko*. The birds had ruined all but a few of the *kumara* plantings, and the corn had vanished. Their disappointment and in some cases anger, was used as a springboard for an exercise on *pukeko*. Word and picture assignments were included along with language reinforcement and design drawings for a plan to prevent another attack. Figure 5 shows a *Pukeko* response. Apart from developing language and writing skills, the text provides interesting commentaries on environmental perspectives. The exercise shows that learners understood the food needs, habitats and activities of the bird. They did the research, and wrote up their findings in *te reo* with appropriate cultural references. Other commentaries also contained text that pointed to a developing environmental awareness.

⁶ “Managing self” (students know who they are, where they come from, and where they fit in) and “Participating and contributing” (students participate actively in local national and global communities”).

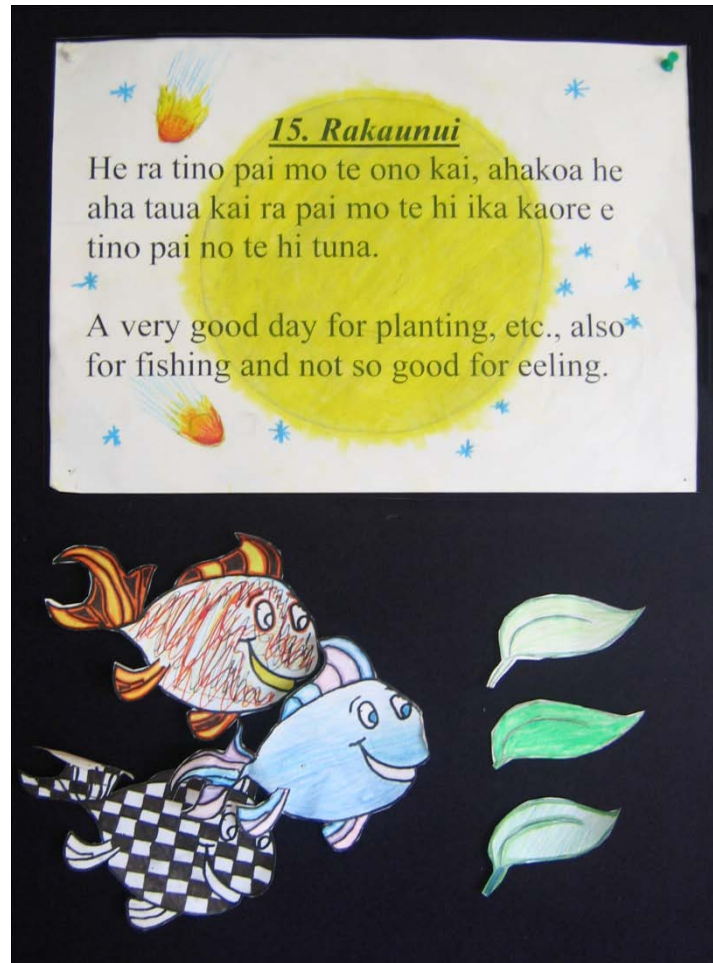


Figure 3. *Rakaunui*, the 15th day of *te maramataka* (Māori monthly calendar), is regarded as one of the better days for planting and harvesting of *kai* (food) and *marā* (gardens).



Figure 4. *Kaumatua* demonstrates cultivation technique before letting the class work in *te marā Māori*

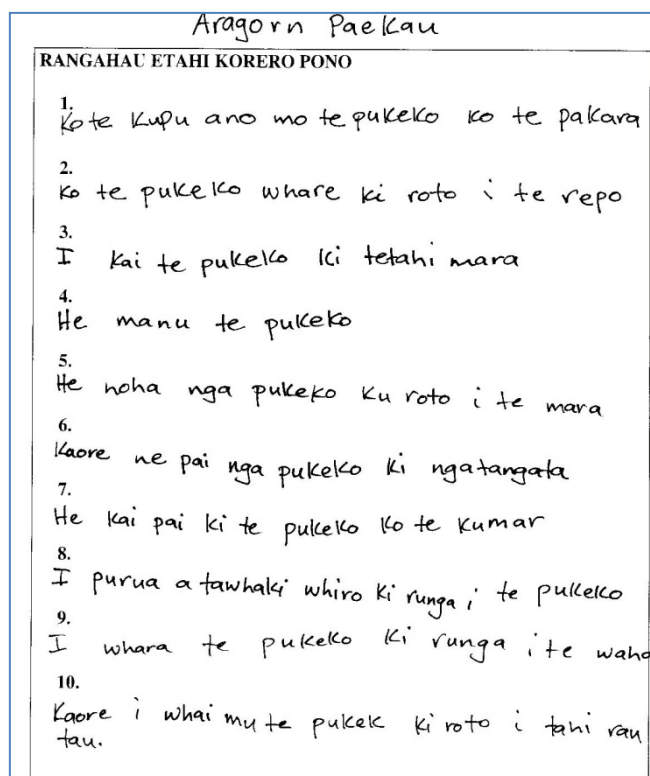


Figure 5. Aragon's comments in *te reo* on *Pukeko*.

The gardens are within 200 metres of the coast, and the proximity allowed a second teaching initiative to be developed when a planned cultivation session was not required. The *Kaumātua* drew attention to some erosion of the coastal dunes, and explained the forces of the wind and waves. He also drew attention to the adverse effects that humans have when traversing the dunes instead of using walkways to access the beach. He encouraged the class to work with the wind, sand, sea, and plants like spinifex and pingao (coastal grasses) to protect the eroding dunes. The children saw the influence humans had on the environment through working to protect it. One member of the class noticed a visitor sitting on the grasses in an unstable area, and walked down the beach to request that the visitor move. The local children were pleased to have their simple requests accepted.

The experiential learning provided new understandings of the causes and effects of coastal erosion. Through working in and with the different elements of the environment the children developed a better understanding of dune recovery processes and a respect for this vulnerable environment. The field experience was followed up with a power point presentation on coastal erosion that illustrated different ways of rebuilding eroding beaches in other parts of Aotearoa/New Zealand. The classroom and field experiences combined led to a poster-making activity aimed at educating people about good practices, such as using walkways to access beaches.

6. THE POTENTIAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION USING *KAUPAPA MĀORI*

We believe the 1989 Education Act marks a significant change point in education for Aotearoa. In reaction to the Hunn report (1961) and the *Education of Māori Children: A Review* (1971), the Act created a post-colonial opportunity that Māori communities were already exercising informally. While the substantive text of the paper focuses on the local experience in Whaingaroa, we think the experience offers some useful pointers for other educational systems experiencing bi- or multi-cultural tensions. Post-colonial systems are a particular case, but societies with immigrant communities, and nation states with pluralistic cultural communities might also consider the impact of *kaupapa Māori* in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

For us, there are three inter-related points. We argue most strongly for the formal recognition of the language and the culture, we feel strongly that the importance of the local area and community involvement needs to be recognised, and we argue that geography and environmental education

provide the natural interface with curriculum. We also see the option of using *kaupapa Māori* much more broadly to shape school-based curriculum where the experience of the garden can reach into science, history and technology teaching areas.

Te Marautanga o Aotearoa (the curriculum statement for education in the Māori medium) aims to “develop successful learners, who will grow as competent and confident learners.... They will have the skills and knowledge to participate in and contribute to Māori society and the wider world“. Language and culture are pivotal in this enterprise. The recently reviewed curriculum statement also continues to value the importance of *kaupapa Māori*. In the assessment area, the introduction of New Zealand standards has had mixed reactions, and led to some tensions between the Māori Party Associate Minister of Education (Pita Sharples) and the Ministry of Education, but, the continued Māori support for standards designed to meet the needs of Māori immersion programs bodes well for the future.

In mainstream schools, parents and community contacts are organised through Boards of Trustees. *Te Roopu Aroha ki te Reo* works with the community in this way, but also looks for locally based experience to re-inforce *kaupapa Māori*. This participation makes the delivery of key competencies relatively easy, and we suggest community based and local education constitute a second feature that can be used in bi-or multicultural education.

Finally, the matters we consider as important in our bi-cultural exploration of *Te Roopu Aroha ki te Reo* are a curriculum that uses the principles of *kaupapa Māori*. We also think it is important for the future of all learners in Aotearoa that they have access to the richness of experience in place and culture that are enjoyed by both Māori and pakeha learners at places like Raglan. The Social Sciences Essential Learning Area is a good place to start, with teaching and learning in Geography providing the essential connection through an interest in space and place.

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