The teaching and learning of *te reo Māori* in a higher education context: Intensive fast track immersion versus gradual progressive language exposure

Sophie Nock
Te Pua Wānanga Ki Te Ao
The School of Māori and Pacific Development
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato
University of Waikato
Private Bag 3106, Hamilton, New Zealand
[sophnock@waikato.ac.nz]

Abstract
I report here on a comparison of the course grades of Bachelors degree students who are following two different pathways towards a major in *te reo Māori* – a traditional pathway in which language courses at different levels are spread over three or four years, and an intensive, fast-track, language immersion pathway in which courses in *te reo Māori* are concentrated into the first year of the degree programme. My findings are that, overall, in terms of course grades at level three, students following the intensive, fast-track, language-immersion pathway out-perform other students in *te reo Māori* course assessments. Thus, so far as course grades are concerned, many students appear to benefit from the fast track pathway. Whether course grades can be related to proficiency achievements and whether immediate gains are reflected in long-term gains is something that remains to be investigated.

Te reo Māori in the New Zealand education system: General background

Te reo Māori and *tikanga Māori* have been under constant attack since the beginning of European colonisation of New Zealand. In 1844, state involvement in the schooling of Māori began and, with it, the unashamed colonial policy of assimilation. Three years later, under the Education Ordinance Act initiated by Sir George Grey, Māori were obliged, in order to receive educational subsidies, to comply with certain conditions, including the condition that education should be conducted through the medium of English. Many Māori children had to leave their home villages in order to attend missionary boarding schools. Through the Native Schools Acts of 1858 and 1867, a monocultural system of education was enshrined in statute. From that point on, the New Zealand education system became proudly monolingual as well as monocultural. As McNaughton, Ka'ai, Chunn and Taogaga (1990, p. 67) observe, *te reo Māori* was relegated to the status of a rural folk language – one that was not welcome across the school threshold. In response, many Māori parents, in an attempt to help their children to cope, began to use English at home. Inter-generational transmission of the language was at risk. The disastrous effects of all of this are evident in a whole range of areas, the most significant of which was the near loss of *te reo Māori* and *tikanga Māori* in the middle decades of the 20th century.

Alarmed at the prospect of losing their language, Māori leaders began, in the 1960s, to alert the people to the implications of the loss of their language. Their efforts bore little fruit. By the mid 1970s, *te reo Māori* was no longer used naturally as the everyday medium of communication in Māori communities, these communities themselves having been seriously undermined by an increasing trend for rural-dwelling Māori to move to the cities in search of employment. As Benton's sociolinguistic survey of Māori households confirmed, by the 1970s, the vast majority

Nock, S. (2006). The teaching and learning of te reo Māori in a higher education context: Intensive fast track immersion versus gradual progressive language exposure. *He Puna Kōrero: Journal of Māori and Pacific Development.* 7(1), 48–62. https://doi.org/10.15663/K10.14114

of young Māori were growing up with little or no knowledge of *te reo Māori* and *tikanga Māori* (Benton, 1997). Although *te reo Māori* continued to be an important indicator of Māoritanga, its continuing viability as a language of daily discourse was no longer assured (p. 12). Indeed, according to fluent speakers of *te reo Māori*, only two language domains remained relatively secure: the domain of the marae[1] and that of certain religious observances (p. 9). In many other areas, including that of the school curriculum, *te reo Māori* had no place or, at best, an insignificant place (p. 12). Not only was English the language of radio, television, newspapers, magazines, and the movies, it was also the language of schooling and, for the majority of Māori children, the language of their neighbourhood. As Benton (1997, p. 12) observed:

> It was clear that Māori was, by the 1970s, playing only a very marginal role in the upbringing of Māori children, and that, if nature were left to take its course, Māori would be a language without native speakers with the passing of the present generation of Māori speaking parents.

Languages do not flourish in a social vacuum and must be used in a variety of social contexts. It became evident to Māori that something drastic had to be done. Māori initiatives to revitalise the language began in earnest and in the late seventies when Katarina Mataira and Ngoi Pēwhairangi introduced the 'Te Ataarangi method,' an adaptation of Caleb Gattegno's 'silent method', which he describes as offering "a way in which everything and everyone serves one aim; to make everyone into the competent learner" (Gattegno, 1978, p. 89). As Mataira (1980, p. 15) asserts in her Masters thesis:

> [The] primary tenet of the 'Silent Way' . . . is the subordination of teaching to learning. As a way through which the foreign language might be learned, the native tongue is suppressed and the target language used as the medium of instruction. Cuisenaire rods are used to illustrate meaning, and together with a series of wall charts are used to trigger utterances.

Classes were set up, often in polytechnics initially, and many Māori had their first opportunity to learn their language.

In 1985, the highly respected Taranaki elder, Huirangi Waikerepuru, in collaboration with *Ngā Kaiwhakapumau i te Reo (Inc),* lodged a claim with the Waitangi Tribunal for official recognition of *te reo Māori* on the grounds that Article Two of the Treaty of Waitangi guarantees protection of te reo Māori by the Crown.[2] It was argued that government had a duty, through affirmative action, to support and protect te reo Māori. As a direct result of this claim, *te reo Māori* was recognised in the Māori Language Act 1987 as an official language of New Zealand and *Te Taura Whiri i te Reo* (The Māori Language Commission) was established. For all its shortcomings, the Māori Language Act 1987 represented the beginning of official recognition and endorsement of the efforts Māori were making to revitalise their language. Attitudes have gradually shifted, interest in learning *te reo Māori* has grown, and the number of areas in which speakers of the language have a competitive advantage in relation to employment prospects has increased. Community-based efforts have led to the establishment of the *Kōhanga Reo* movement,[3] *Kura Kaupapa Māori*,[4] *Te Whare Kura*[5] and *Te Whare Wānanga*.[6] In addition, some mainstream schools have introduced bilingual units and many mainstream educational institutions – schools,

polytechnics and universities – now offer *te reo Māori* as a subject. *Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato* (The University of Waikato) was the first mainstream tertiary institution to establish an intensive, fast track, immersion route to majoring in *te reo Māori* in Bachelors degree programmes. It remains the only university to do so, although some other tertiary institutions, such as polytechnics, now offer this type of programme.

Majoring in *te reo Māori*: *Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato* and the intensive, fast track, immersion route

Te Tohu Paetahi[7] is a programme offered by the University of Waikato in which first year students majoring in *te reo Māori* (within the context of a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Māori and Pacific Development) are taught in a Māori-immersion context. Students in their first year of study take *te reo Māori* courses at level 1 and above and also, in the first few years of the operation of the programme, were required to take a *tikanga* course in their first year of study. In their second and third years, they take a range of other courses, the aim being that the majority of these courses should be taught through the medium of *te reo Māori*.[8]

Te Tohu Paetahi, introduced in 1991, was the brainchild of a group of academics at *Te Whare Wananga o Waikato*.[9] Applicants for the programme are subjected to a rigorous interview process which focuses on their level of commitment and their capacity to cope with the demands of the programme. Since the establishment of a supportive *whānau*-based learning environment is an important aspect of the programme, the students in each group are mixed in terms of sex, age, background and skills. When tutors are added to the mix, each group is made up of people of varying ages with a range of skills and abilities and a range of existing levels of competence in *te reo Māori*.[10] In their first year, *Te Tohu Paetahi* students take six language courses and attend classes (which are taught through the medium of *te reo Māori*) from 9 – 3 (with breaks for morning tea and lunch) on Monday through Friday. They do this for six blocks of four weeks each, each block being associated with one of the six *te reo Māori* courses they are required to complete in their first year of study. Students are also involved in a range of evening and week-end group activities, including marae visits. A typical morning begins with a *karakia*[11] (to clear the pathway for successful learning) and a *kapa haka*[12] session (to awaken the spirit.)

Establishing the research question

It is widely believed that language immersion programmes are effective. One of the reasons often given for this belief is that they replicate, to some extent at least, the conditions under which very young children acquire language. It cannot simply be assumed, however, that language immersion contexts are necessarily more effective in producing highly proficient users of a language in the case of older children and adults, particularly if learners are aiming not only to achieve proficiency in using the language in everyday conversational contexts, but also in academic contexts, not only in listening and speaking, but also in reading and writing. After all, there are some fundamental differences between very young children and older children and adults in terms of cognitive development, approaches to interaction and existing linguistic competencies. There are also some fundamental differences between the development of listening and speaking skills and the development of reading and writing skills, and between everyday conversational language and academic language. *Te Tohu Paetahi* students are required, particularly in their second and third years, to take a range of

academic papers through the medium of *te reo Māori*. The skills required for this will include, but will not be restricted to, those required for everyday conversational interaction.

There are different ways in which the effectiveness of immersion programmes may be assessed. For example, a language immersion programme may be considered effective to the extent that it provides a safe and supportive learning environment, or to the extent that it operates in a culturally rich context, or because it is regarded by the target language community as being consistent with their beliefs about learning generally. For these reasons, it is important to specify clearly a set of effectiveness criteria for *Te Tohu Paetahi* and to develop effectiveness measures in relation to these criteria.

Immersion programmes aim to "provide the quantity and quality of involvement in the use of the target language that ensure the development of a high level of proficiency" (Johnson & Swain, 1997, p. xiii). This is one of the aims of *Te Tohu Paetahi*. It would therefore be interesting to know whether there is any significant difference, in terms of proficiency gains, between *Te Tohu Paetahi* students and those following the more traditional route, and, in addition, whether early proficiency gains are sustained. However, because students following these routes in the past have not been required to sit entry and exit proficiency tests, this is something that must remain for the future. In the mean time, there is one effectiveness criterion that can be investigated, that is, whether *Te Tohu Paetahi* students perform better than mainstream students in *te reo Māori* course assessments. The research question here is, therefore: *Do Te Tohu Paetahi intensive, fast track, immersion students perform better overall in terms of te reo Māori level 3 course grades than students following the more traditional route which provides for exposure to the language for fewer hours but over a longer time span?*

Critical review of some relevant research literature

Writing in the early 1990s, Genesee (1994, p. 1) describes second language immersion programmes as being "[among] the most interesting innovations in second language education during the last two decades". Many different communities have established immersion contexts for the teaching and learning of indigenous languages. One example is that of the establishment in New Zealand of *Kōhanga Reo* (language nests) in which preschool children are immersed in *te reo Māori* and *tikanga Māori*. The *Kōhanga Reo* movement is based on an holistic philosophy, "[the] basic concept . . . [being] to put pre-school children in a room with a nana who would look after them and care for them using the Māori language and customs" (Sharples, 1994, p. 14). The *Kōhanga Reo* movement is, however, more than an educational programme, "[it] is a political movement for the educational emancipation of Māori from Pākehā control" (Walker, 1991, p.9). The same can be said of the establishment of *Kura Kaupapa Māori*, schools in which immersion in *te reo Māori* is only one aspect of an holistic, Māori-centred environment in which there is "commitment to *Te Aho Matua* (Māori principles for life) as a working philosophy for all aspects of school life" (Education Review Office, 1995, p. 3).

Just as Māori have come to the conclusion that language immersion has an important role to play in the revival of their language, so have other groups who have been involved in the struggle to save indigenous or heritage languages, such as the Hawaiian language. Slaughter (1997, p. 124) observes in her case study of *Kula*

Kaiapuni Hawai'i[12] that "[t]he story of Hawaiian Language Immersion shows that an ethnolinguistic minority group can reclaim its language and culture, at least partially, through the development of an immersion program". The Catalan and Basque languages in Spain have suffered in the same way as have the Māori and Hawaiian languages and the people have made similar efforts to revive them. Artigal (1997, p. 131) argues that the Catalan immersion program "is not simply an opportunity for individuals to learn two languages [but] . . . part of the project of reinstating Catalonia's heritage language as a language of normal use in its territory". As Arzamendi and Genesee (1997, p. 151) observe, "[immersion] in the at-risk language is . . . often part of a more extensive plan for language revitalization".

It has been claimed that immersion programmes are highly motivating for participants. Thus, for example, Jones (1991) notes that the most significant factor in participants' choice of one of the Ulpan[13] intensive Welsh language courses in Lampeter is the fact that it involves language immersion. She also claims "frequent concise contact with the language over a short period, rather than weak contact with language over a long period is the best way for learners to master this new medium" (p. 184). This claim is based on the views of participants who felt that "[intensive] instruction in an immersion setting . . . [resulted] in superior language proficiency' and [eased] integration into the Welsh community" (p. 183). Indeed, one participant noted that "[there] is no opportunity to lose interest when you are learning quickly", adding: "I want to learn quickly because I wish to use the language and it would take me years to learn the language in a conventional night class" (p. 187).

Much of the research on language learning in general, and immersion language programmes in particular, relates to relatively young learners in the context of schooling. As such, it is not necessarily of direct relevance here. It is useful to note, however, that the widely held belief that young learners are necessarily better equipped to learn languages than adolescent or adult learners (see, for example, Krashen, Long, & Scarcella, 1979) does not have widespread support in the research literature.[14] Indeed, a number of studies have indicated that older children are more effective language learners than younger ones (see, for example, Genesee, 1981 & 1987; Stern, Burstall, & Harley, 1975). As McLaughlin (1992, p. 2) observes, second language learning research "has consistently demonstrated that adolescents and adults perform better than young children under controlled conditions". Furthermore, although some researchers have concluded that bilingualism has associated cognitive, cultural and psychological advantages, Johnson and Swain (1997) note that "[under] less favourable conditions, doubts have arisen concerning the potential of immersion programs to achieve a full additive bilingualism" (p. 15). This would appear to be supported by Houia's (2002) research on the types of error found in the writing of Year 5 students studying in Māori-immersion settings.

It is important when reviewing what has been written about the teaching and learning of languages in immersion settings to separate belief and assertion from evidence. Thus, with reference to children learning the Arapaho language,[15] Greymorning (1997, p. 25) assets that they needed to be placed "in a setting that paralleled the way fluent speakers acquired Arapaho" in order to "accomplish the long range goal of producing children who can fluently speak Arapaho". However, he also counters the commonly held belief that immersion is sufficient in and of itself, noting that the progress of some students was less than desirable until "it became clear that what was missing was an understanding, implementation, and effective use of methodology".

Indeed, it could be argued that whereas some aspects of the environment in which very young children naturally acquire language can be replicated in language immersion educational contexts, many cannot, perhaps even, in the case of older children and adults, *should* not, given the fundamental differences in existing cognitive and linguistic development.

Greymorning (1997, p. 25), following observations he made during a language conference in 1993 that showcased the immersion efforts of the Hawaiians, estimated that for students to become fluent in a language they generally require a minimum of between 600 and 700 contact hours. Whatever is meant in this context by 'fluency', this estimate seems to be extremely low. Thus, for example, Brown (1998) has argued that for second language learners of English to move a half band on the IELTS proficiency test involves, on average, 10 weeks of face-to-face tuition at 20 hours per week, that is, 200 hours. This means that in order to move from band 2 (post-beginner) to band 6 (intermediate level), a student would, on average, require 1,000 hours of face-to-face tuition. Students achieving band 6 would still have a long way to go to achieve an advanced level of proficiency. Quite apart from considerations such as this, intensive fast track programmes are not necessarily equally appropriate for all students. Although there is a great deal of research on second language learning at the primary and secondary school level in general, there is very little on second language learning in university contexts, particularly as it relates to proficiency achievements. Notable exceptions to this are the C-test-based research of Coleman (1994; 1996) and Coleman et al. (1994) in Europe and that of Johnson (2000, pp. 477 - 517) in New Zealand.

The European Framework of Reference for Languages (Council of Europe, 2001), and, in particular, the establishment of Common Reference Levels, is beginning to have an effect. Interest in establishing proficiency benchmarks for language learning in school, college and university contexts is growing. Thus, for example, recent New Zealand Ministry of Education languages curricula include proficiency targets (Crombie, 2006) and there is a growing amount of research on the language proficiency achievements of students in Asian colleges and universities (see, for example, Chen & Johnson (2004) and Her (2006)). So far as *te reo Māori* is concerned, however, the development of proficiency test instruments is in its infancy and it is likely to be some time before there are tests whose validity and reliability can be assured.

Methodology and results

I began by comparing the total number of class contact hours of first year *Te Tohu Paetahi* students (doing six courses in *te reo Māori*) with those involved in doing six *te reo Māori* courses in the mainstream.

Te Tohu Paetahi students attend classes in six four week blocks, each block being associated with one *te reo Māori* course. Each block involves attendance from 9 – 3, five days a week with generally a half hour tea break in the morning and a one hour break for lunch. Each day begins with *karakia* and *kapa haka.* Since *karakia* and *kapa haka* play a role in language acquisition, I have included them in the overall class contact hours. I have also included the morning tea break as students are expected to use this break to practice their language skills. However, although the majority of students also use the lunch break as an opportunity for language practice, tutors are not always available to monitor language use during the lunch break and so

I have not included this in the calculation of class time. So far as mainstream students are concerned, a typical *te reo Māori* course involves two 'lecture' sessions[16] of two hours each per week (over a period of 12 weeks) plus an optional weekly one hour tutorial and an optional weekly one hour language laboratory session (which may be replaced by an optional one hour additional tutorial). The vast majority of students avail themselves of the opportunity to attend tutorial and language laboratory sessions and so these are factored into the class contact hours. Taking all of these considerations into account, *Table 1* below provides an overview of the number of class contact hours involved in each *te reo Māori* course in the case of *Te Tohu Paetahi* and mainstream students.

Table 1: **Number of class contact hours involved in each *te reo Māori* course in the case of *Te Tohu Paetahi* and mainstream students**

	Class contact hours (6 courses)	**Comments**
Te Tohu Paetahi	600 hours	Each course involves 4 weeks, 5 hours per day (weekdays), including *karakia*, *kapa haka* and language practice during morning tea break
Mainstream	432 hours	Each course generally involves 12 weeks, 6 hours per week (including optional tutorial/ laboratory sessions)

For six *te reo Māori* courses, the difference in class contact hours is 168 (that is, 600 hours of class contact for *Te Tohu Paetahi* students; 432 hours for mainstream students). It should be borne in mind, however, that *Te Tohu Paetahi* students are also involved in group activities (including marae visits) on the evenings and weekends.

I began by accessing the course grades of all students doing courses in *te reo Māori* for an eight year period beginning in 1997, the year in which *Te Tohu Paetahi* began to divide students into two streams – a *Hukatai* stream for beginners and a *Rehutai* stream for more advanced learners. I then compared the final grades of mainstream and *Rehutai* stream *Te Tohu Paetahi* students on the two highest level (i.e., level 3) *te reo Māori* courses, that is *te reo Māori pre-advanced* and *te reo Māori advanced.*[17, 18] To facilitate the comparison, I converted course grades into percentage ranges, using the conversion scale provided by the university. In each case, I selected the mid point of the range indicated in the conversion chart. Thus, an A+ grade became 92.5%, the mid point of the A+ range (90% - 95%).[19] The next stage was to add together all of the final grades in each of the two courses for each of the students following each of the two routes (*Te Tohu Paetahi* - *Rehutai* and mainstream) in each of the eight years and then to divide by the total number of students following each route in each year to give an overall average for each of the two level 3 courses. The results are included in *Tables 2* and *3* below where the number of students in each group is indicated in brackets after the percentage figures. In *Table 4* below, the grades in the two courses are combined for each group of students. *Figures 1 – 3* below provide a representation of the comparisons in the form of graphs.

Table 2: **Comparison of the final grade averages for *te reo Maori* pre-advanced**

***Te Reo Māori* Pre-Advanced**	**2004**	**2003**	**2002**	**2001**	**2000**	**1999**	**1998**	**1997**
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	60% (25)[20]	74% (19)	69% (12)	78% (24)	65% (14)	62% (19)	66% (25)	71% (26)
Mainstream	58% (67)	72% (49)	52% (52)	54% (78)	53% (48)	60% (74)	63% (113)	61% (126)
Variance	2%	2%	17%	24%	12%	2%	3%	10%

Table 3: **Comparison of the final grade averages for *te reo Māori* advanced**

***Te Reo Māori* Advanced**	**2004**	**2003**	**2002**	**2001**	**2000**	**1999**	**1998**	**1997**
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	68% (25)	69% (18)	67% (10)	50% (24)	66% (14)	64% (17)	75% (25)	68% (26)
Mainstream	54% (58)	56% (54)	57% (53)	61% (69)	61% (49)	57% (67)	63% (97)	54.5% (126)
Variance	14%	13%	10%	-11%	5%	7%	12%	12.5%

Table 4: **Comparison of the final grade averages for a combination of *te reo Māori* pre-advanced and *te reo Māori* advanced**

Combined results: *Te reo Māori* Pre-Advanced and *Te reo Māori* Advanced	**2004**	**2003**	**2002**	**2001**	**2000**	**1999**	**1998**	**1997**
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	64%	71.5%	68%	64%	65.5%	63%	70.5%	69.5%
Mainstream	56%	63%	54.5%	57.5%	57%	58.5%	63%	57.75%
Variance	8%	8.5%	13.5%	6.5%	8.5%	4.5%	7.5%	11.75%

Figure 1: Te reo Māori **pre-advanced -** ***Te Tohu Paetahi - Rehutai*** **and mainstream**

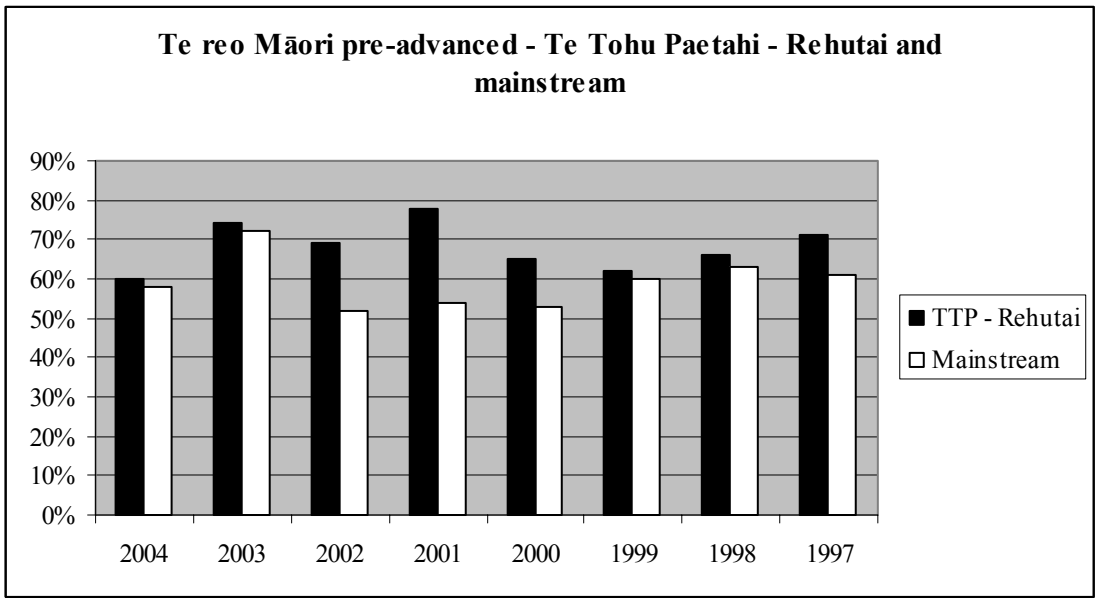


***Figure 2: Te reo Māori* advanced - *Te Tohu Paetahi - Rehutai* and mainstream**

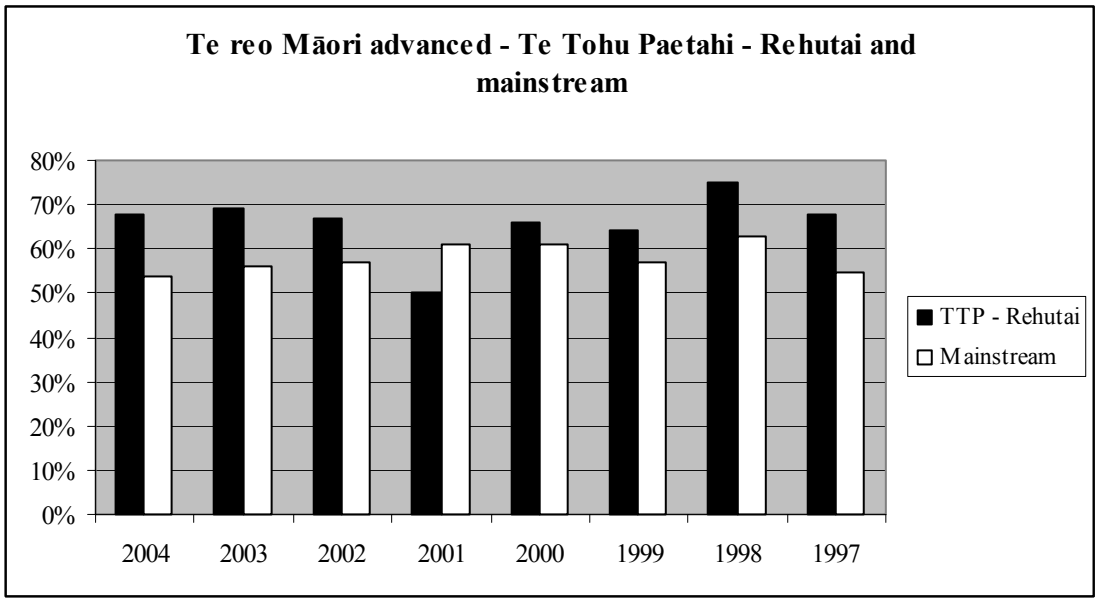
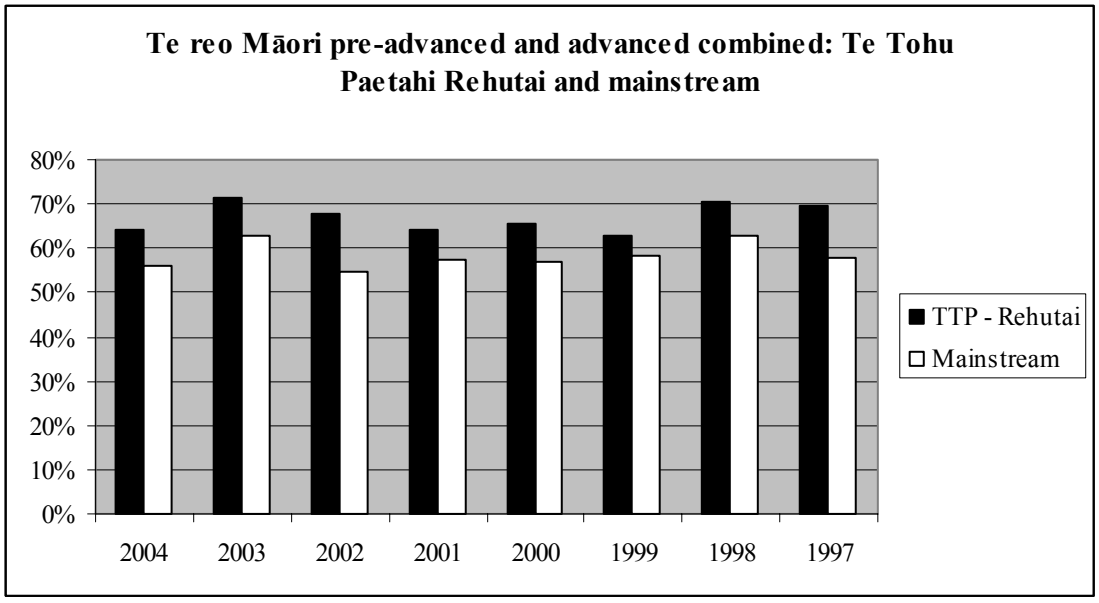


***Figure 3: Te reo Māori* pre-advanced and advanced combined: *Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* and mainstream**



The next stage was to look at the percentage of ICs (incomplete courses), WDs (course withdrawals) and Fs (course failures). There were no course withdrawals. The figures for incomplete and failed courses are indicated in *Tables 5 – 10* below.

Table 5: **Incomplete courses -*Te reo Māori* pre-advanced**

Year	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	-	16% (3/19)	33% (4/12)	29% (7/24)	-	11% (2/19)	4% (1/25)	8% (2/26)
Mainstream	3% (2/67)[21]	8% (4/49)	2% (1/52)	4% (3/78)	8% (4/48)	5% (4/74)	7% (8/113)	21% (26/126)

Table 6: **Incomplete courses - *Te reo Māori* advanced**

Year	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	-	17% (3/18)	30% (3/10)	38% (9/24)	7% (1/14)	12% (2/17)	-	11.5% (3/26)
Mainstream	-	11% (5/54)	25% (13/53)	13% (9/69)	10% (5/49)	18% (12/67)	10% (10/97)	17.5% (22/126)

Table 7: **Incomplete courses - *Te reo Māori* pre advanced and *te reo Māori* advanced combined**

Year	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	-	16.5%	31.5%	33.5%	3.5%	11.5%	2%	9.75%
Mainstream	1.5%	9.5%	13.5%	8.5%	9%	11.5%	8.5%	19.25%

Table 8**: Course failures - *Te reo Māori* pre-advanced**

Year	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	16% (4/25)	5% (1/19)	-	8% (2/24)	-	5% (1/19)	4% (1/25)	-
Mainstream	24% (16/67)	2% (1/49)	27% (14/52)	22% (17/78)	19% (9/48)	14% (10/74)	9% (10/113)	9% (11/126)

Table 9: **Course failures - *Te reo Māori* advanced**

Year	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	12% (3/25)	-	10% (1/10)	13% (3/24)	7% (1/14)	-	-	-
Mainstream	31% (18/58)	20% (11/54)	9% (5/53)	10% (7/69)	10% (5/49)	16% (11/67)	5% (5/97)	15% (19/126)

Table 10: **Course Failures - *Te reo Māori* pre-advanced and *te reo Māori* advanced combined**

Year	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000	1999	1998	1997
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	14%	5%	10%	10.5%	-	5%	4%	-
Mainstream	27.5%	11%	18%	16%	12.5%	15%	7%	12%
Variance	13%	6%	8%	5.5%	12.5%	10%	3%	12%

Next, I looked at the percentage of students in each cohort who achieved in each of the following pass grade ranges: A+; A; A-; B+; B; B-; C+; C; C- (see *Table 11* below).

Table 11: **Percentage of students in each grade range: *te reo Māori* pre-advanced and *te reo Māori* advanced combined (combined averages for years 2004 - 1997)**

Grade	A+	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	IC	Fs
Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai	8.5%	10%	10%	10%	10.5%	11.5%	11.5%	8.5%	1.5%	13%	5%
Mainstream	3.5%	5%	5.5%	7%	11%	12%	14%	13%	1%	16%	12%
Variance	4.5%	5%	4.5%	3%	0.5	1.5%	2.5%	4.5%	0.5%	-.3%	-.7%

Discussion

Comparison of the performance of the two groups (*Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* and mainstream) in two level 3 courses over an eight year period (1997 – 2004) in terms of final grades reveals that the *Te Tohu Paetahi* students out-performed the mainstream students in each of these years in one of the courses (*te reo Māori* pre advanced). In the other course (*te reo Māori* advanced), the situation was similar except for one year (2001). Taking the two courses together, the percentage variance ranged from 2% *in te reo Māori* pre-advanced in 2003 and 2004 to 24% (in *te reo Māori* pre-advanced) in 2001. Taking the two courses together, the percentage difference overall varied from 4.5% in 1999 to 13.5% in 2002.

So far as incomplete courses, withdrawals and failures were concerned, the situation was more mixed. There were no withdrawals in either case. However, over the eight years with which this study is concerned, an average of 4.75% of *Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* stream students taking the pre-advanced course failed the course as compared with 15.75% of mainstream students. In the case of the advanced course, 5.25% of *Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* stream failed the course as compared with 14.5% of mainstream students. Overall, taking the two courses together, the percentage fail rate was 6% in the case of *Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* stream students and 14.8% % in the case of mainstream students.

The figures for incomplete courses (courses in which students did not complete all of the assignments and internal tests), are also mixed. In the case of *Te Tohu Paetahi* students doing the *te reo Māori* pre-advanced course, the percentage of non-completions ranges from 0% (in 2000 and 2004) to 33% in 2002. In the case of mainstream students doing the same course, the percentage of non-completions ranges from 2% in 2002 to 21% in 1997. For the *te reo Māori* advanced course, the non-completions range, for *Te Tohu Paetahi* students, from 0% (in 1998 and 2004) to 38% in 2001; for mainstream students, the range is from 0% in 2004 to 25% in 2002. Overall, taking the two courses together, the percentage non-completion rate (for all years combined) is 13.5% for *Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* stream students and 10% for mainstream students.

Looking at grade ranges, the following picture emerges. Whereas 28.5% of *Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* stream students achieved a grade in the A range (A+, A, A-), only 14% of mainstream students did so. The percentage of students achieving in the B

range in both groups was very close (32% as compared with 30%). However, whereas 21.5% of *Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* stream students were in the C range, 28% of mainstream students were in this range.

Conclusion

What these figures reveal is that, so far as the two level 3 courses examined are concerned, mainstream students were considerably more liable to course failure than were *Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* stream students (14.8% as compared to 6%). However, mainstream students had a slightly lower non-completion rate (10% as compared to 13.5%). So far as grade ranges are concerned, a similar percentage of mainstream and *Te Tohu Paetahi Rehutai* stream students achieved in the B range (30% as compared with 32%). However, mainstream students were considerably less likely to achieve in the A range (14% as compared with 28.5%) and also more likely to be placed in the C range (28% as compared with 21.5%).

At first sight, this would appear to indicate that the *Te Tohu Paetahi* programme is, in terms of student performance in course assessments, a preferable route. However, the figures presented here should be seen as indicative only. It is important to note that these figures relate to two level 3 courses only and do not include *Te Tohu Paetahi Hukatai* stream students, that is, those who are assessed as beginners when they enrol in the programme. Before any firm conclusions can be reached, it is important to examine the grades, the completion and fail rates and the withdrawals for all *te reo Māori* courses included in the programme and for all students. It would also be interesting to separate out the figures for those students who identify as Māori and those who do not. Even then, making valid comparisons will be difficult unless we have a clear indication of the existing proficiency achievements of all students at the point of entry. What is really needed is a valid and reliable proficiency test (covering reading, writing, listening and speaking) that can be administered to all students at the point of programme entry and programme exist and, wherever possible, one year and two years after they have exited the programme. We could then compare students following different routes in terms of short term and longer term proficiency gains as well as comparing them in terms of assessment and examination performance. Furthermore, we need to incorporate into the mix the fact that *Te Tohu Paetahi* students are more likely than other students to take courses in their second and third years of study that are taught through the medium of *te reo Māori*. How effective these courses are in terms of contributing to overall proficiency gains is another important question. All of these things are worthy of study and it is my intention to include all of them in future studies. For the moment, however, it is important to note that the advantages (or otherwise) of the *Te Tohu Paetahi* route cannot be assessed solely in terms of proficiency gains and course assessments. There are other factors that need to be considered such as students' perceptions of the effectiveness of the different routes in terms of, for example, growth in cultural knowledge and understanding and motivation in relation to undertaking further study. Considerations such as these will also need to be factored into any serious assessment of the comparative value of the different degree routes.

Endnotes

1. The marae in Māori tradition is the open space in front of the ancestral meeting house. In more recent times, the word 'marae' is often used with reference to the entire meeting house complex.
2. The Waitangi Tribunal was established under the Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975 and its amendments and was set up to hear claims against the Crown by Māori and to report its findings and recommendations to the Minister of Māori Affairs.
3. These preschool 'language nests' were first established in 1982 in Wainuiomata, Wellington.
4. Māori-immersion primary schools were first established at the Hoani Waititi Marae in 1985.
5. Māori-immersion high schools were first established in 1993 at Hoani Waititi Marae.
6. This refers to the higher education sector – universities.
7. This can be translated literally as 'the first level degree'.
8. In the early years of *Te Tohu Paetahi*, students could complete their degrees by selecting from a wide range of courses (e.g., management, politics, education, computing, science, applied linguistics) taught totally or partially through the medium of *te reo Māori.* More recently, however, they have become more focused on courses offered by *Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao* (School of Māori and Pacific Development) as the university has responded to increasing financial pressure by reducing the number and variety of courses offered through the medium of *te reo Māori* in order to increase its student/staff ratio.
9. They included Professor Wilf Malcom (Vice Chancellor at that time), Professor Te Wharehuia Milroy, Associate Professor Hirini Melbourne, John Moorfield and senior academic staff members of what was then the Māori department.
10. In response to increased demand, *Te Tohu Paetahi* students have been divided, since 1997, into two streams – a *Hukatai* stream for beginners and a *Rehutai* stream for the more advanced learners.
11. This form of prayer that generally takes place at the beginning of all activities.
12. This is a programme designed to assist in saving the indigenous language of Hawai'i.
13. The Ulpan method of learning, devised originally to teach Hebrew to immigrants to the State of Israel, is often referred to as the 'direct method'.
14. I am not referring here to natural language acquisition by very young children.
15. The Arapaho language is the native language of the Arapaho Indians from the Wind River Reservation in Wyoming. Staff from the Arapaho Language Lodge have steadily worked to establish a new generation of Arapaho speaking children.
16. Although the university timetable records these sessions as lectures, they are considerably more interactive than this term suggests.
17. I did not include students in the *Hukatai* stream in this study as students in this stream do not take the two level 3 *te reo Māori* courses in their first year of study.
18. The two courses are recorded in the University calendar as Te Reo Māori Pre Advanced Māori Language 1 (MAOR313) and Te Reo Māori Advanced Māori Language 2 (MAOR314).
19. In regards to the years investigated, the University of Waikato recognised the grades of A++ (90%-100%) and A+ (85%-89%) from 1997 to 2000. In 2001 the A++ grade was abandoned and a new A+ (85%-100%) range was introduced. For the purpose of this study I have recorded an A+ as 92.5%, an A as 82%, an A- as 77.5%, a B+ as 72%, a B as 67.5%, a B- as 62%, a C+ as 57.5%, a C as 52%, a D as 44.5%, and an E as 19.5%.
20. The figures in brackets refer to the actual number of students involved in each case.
21. Below the percentage figures, I provide (in brackets), the actual number followed by the total number in the group

References

Artigal, J. M. (1997). The Catalan immersion programme. In R.K. Johnson & M. Swain (Eds.), *Immersion Education: International Perspectives* (pp. 133-150). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Arzamendi, J. & Genesee, F. (1997). Reflections on immersion education in the Basque Country. In R.K. Johnson & M. Swain (Eds.), *Immersion Education: International Perspectives* (pp. 151-166). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Benton, R, A. (1997). *The Māori language: Dying or reviving*? (A Working Course Prepared for the East West Center Alumni-in-Residence Working Course Series). Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research.

Brown, J, D. (1998). Does IELTS preparation work? An application of the context-adaptive model of language program evaluation. *EA Journal. Occasional Paper, Vol 1.* Australia IELTS: Australia Pty ltd.

Chen, M. & Johnson, D. (2004). Graduation English language proficiency benchmarks in Taiwan: Issues and problems. *The Proceedings of the 2004 International Conference and Workshops on TEFL and Applied Linguistics.* Taiwan: Crane Publishing, pp. 136-147.

Coleman, J. A. (1994). Profiling the advanced learner: The C-Test in British further and Higher Education. In R. Grotjahn (Ed.). *Der C-Test. Theoretische Grundlagen und praktische anwendungen*, *2* (pp. 217-237). Bochum: Brockmeyer.

Coleman, J. A. (1996). *Studying languages – a survey of British and European studies.* London: Centre for Information on Language Teaching and Research.

Coleman, J. A., Grotjahn, R., Klein-Braley, C, & Raatz, U. (1994). The European language proficiency survey: A comparative investigation of foreign language learners in schools and universities in several European countries. *Language Testing Update 16*, 49-55.

Council of Europe. (2001). *Common European framework of reference*: Learning, teaching, assessment. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Crombie, W. (2006). Taiwan and New Zealand: Some critical issues in language policy and planning. *Proceedings of the 23rd. International Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China: Changes, Chances and Challenges in English Teaching and Learning*, *Vol. 1,* 1-11.

Education Review Office/Te Tari Arotake Mātauranga. (1995). *Kura Kaupapa Māori* (Number 10 Winter 1995). Wellington: National Education Evaluation Reports.

Education Ordinance Act 1847.

Gattengo, C. (1978). *Teaching foreign languages in schools the Silent Way.* New York: Educational Solutions Inc.

Genesee, F. (1981). A comparison of early and late second language learning. *Canadian Journal of Behavioural Science, 13,* 115-127.

Genesee, F. (1987). *Learning through two languages: Studies of immersion and bilingual education.* New York: Newbury House.

Genesee, F. (1994). *Integrating language and content: Lessons from immersion* (The National Center for Research on Cultural Diversity & Second Language Learning, Educational Practice Report 11). McGill University. Retrieved 7/12/05 from http://www.ncela.gwu.edu/pubs/ncrcdsll/epr11.htm

Greymorning, S. (1997). Going Beyond Words: The Arapaho Immersion Program. In Jon Reyhner (ed.), *Teaching Indigenous Languages* (pp. 22-30). Flagstaff, Arizona: North Arizona University.

Her, J. (2006). C-Testing: English language proficiency and Taiwanese entrants to BA degrees. *Proceedings of the 23rd. International Conference on English Teaching and Learning in the Republic of China: Changes, Chances and Challenges in English Teaching and Learning, Vol. 1,* 296-309.

Houia, W. (2002). An analysis of typical errors of young learners of te reo Māori. *Journal of Maori and Pacific Development, 3*(1), 44-72.

Johnson, D. (2000). *International languages in New Zealand secondary schools and universities: Coherence, consistency and transparency*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton.

Johnson, R. K. & Swain, M. (1997). Immersion education: A Category within bilingual education. In Johnson, R. K. & Swain, M. (Eds.), *Immersion Education International Perspectives* (pp. 1-16). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Jones, C. (1991). The Ulpan in Wales. *Journal of Multilingual & Multicultural Development*, *12* (3), 183-193.

Krashen, S., Long, M., & Scarcella, R. (1979). Age, rate and eventual attainment in second language acquisition. *TESOL Quarterly*, *13*, 573-582.

Maori Language Act 1987.

Mataira, K. (1980). *The effectiveness of the Silent Way method in teaching of Māori as a second language*. Unpublished Masters Thesis, University of Waikato, Hamilton.

McLaughlin, B. (1992). *Myths & misconceptions about second language learning: What every teacher needs to unlearn.* Santa Cruz: The National Centre for Research on Cultural Diversity & Second Language Learning.

McNaughton, S., Ka'ai, T. (with Chun, T. N., & Taogaga, E.). (1990). *Two studies of transitions: A report on a research project funded by the Ministry of Education*. Auckland, N.Z.: Maori Research and Development Unit Education Dept. University of Auckland.

Native Schools Act 1858.

Native Schools Act 1867.

Sharples, P. (1994). Kura Kaupapa Māori. In Harvey McQueen (ed.), *Education is Change: Twenty Viewpoints* (pp. 11 – 21). Wellington, NZ: Bridget Williams Books Ltd.

Slaughter, H. B. (1997). Indigenous language immersion in Hawai'i: A case study of Kula Kaiapuni Hawai'i, an effort to save the indigenous language of Hawai'i. In R.K. Johnson & M. Swain (Eds.), *Immersion Education: International Perspectives* (pp. 105 - 129). New York: Cambridge University Press.

Stern, H. Burstall, C. & Harley, B. (1975). *French from age eight or eleven?* Toronto: Ontario Institute for Studies in Education.

Treaty of Waitangi Act 1975.

Walker, R. (1991). *Liberating Maori from educational subjection*. Auckland, N.Z.: Research Unit for Maori Education University of Auckland.