

**Using the curriculum guidelines for the teaching and learning of *te reo Māori* in Years 1 – 13 of New Zealand schools to create lessons for young learners**

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**Abstract**

In 2009, The New Zealand Ministry of Education published curriculum guidelines for *te reo* Maori in Years 1 – 13 of English-medium New Zealand schools, that is, from age 5 upwards. These guidelines recommend a communicative approach to the teaching and learning of *te reo Māori*. In this article, we discuss communicative approaches and provide examples of ways in which teachers can design communicative language lessons that are appropriate for very young learners, lessons that are not only fun but also effective in developing genuine communicative competence in *te reo Māori*.

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**Introduction**

In 2009, the New Zealand Ministry of Education released curriculum guidelines for the teaching and learning of *te reo Māori*. That document - *Te aho arataki marau mō te ako i te reo Māori: Kura auraki (Curriculum Guidelines for Teaching and Learning Te Reo Māori in English-medium Schools: Years 1 – 13)* – recommends a communicative way of language teaching (pp. 23 - 24).<sup>1</sup> The following extract is from that section:

Communicative language teaching is teaching that enables students to engage in meaningful communication in the target language. Such communication has a function over and above that of language learning itself.

Among other things, teaches are advised to ensure that:

- *te reo Māori* is used as much as possible in the learning environment;
- interactive, learner-centred tasks are central to the programme;
- language structures are introduced and practised in meaningful contexts;
- non-verbal aspects of communication are included in the programme;
- students develop a range of different language learning strategies;
- students' language learning strategies include strategies for engaging with unfamiliar language;
- language is presented in a way that encourages students to look for patterns and rules.

We begin here by exploring some aspects of communicative language teaching (CLT) through the review of some selected publications in the area. We then suggest ways of

developing communicative materials for young learners of *te reo Māori* (from 5 – 11) that are consistent with the achievement objectives included in the curriculum guidelines, providing an example.

### **A review of selected literature on communicative language teaching (CLT)**

The concept of communicative language teaching (CLT) is closely linked to concepts of communicative competence/ communicative competences. In the 1970s, a number of linguists (e.g. Campbell & Wales, 1970; Habermas, 1970; Hymes, 1971; Jakobovits, 1970) directed attention to the range of things that users of a language needed to be able to do in order to use that language to communicate, that is, in order to develop ‘communicative competence’. For Hymes (1971), communicative competence included: *formal possibility* (understanding of the rules of language), *implementational feasibility* (understanding of the factors, such as memory limitations, that impact on whether a particular utterance is likely to be understood), *contextual appropriacy* (understanding of the contexts in which particular utterances are, or are not appropriate), and *the performative role of utterances* (understanding of the ways in which the interaction between utterances and the contexts in which they occur contributes to the functions, such as warning or complimenting, that these utterances perform). Definitions of communicative competence have changed over time, becoming more complex and multi-faceted. Thus, for example, Celce-Murcia, Dörnyei and Thurrell (1995) divided communicative competence into five major components - *discourse competence* (the ability to understand and create coherent spoken and written discourses), *linguistic competence* (knowledge of language structure), *transactional competence* (the ability to use language to negotiate), *sociocultural competence* (the ability to use language appropriately in a range of social and cultural contexts), and *strategic competence* (the ability to use a range of strategies to maximize effective communication). More recently, the Council of Europe (2001, pp. 108-130) has proposed a model that divides communicative competence into *linguistic skills and knowledge* (including phonology, orthography, vocabulary, morphology and syntax), *sociolinguistic skills and knowledge* (including rules of politeness, norms governing relationships and codification of social rituals), and *pragmatic skills and knowledge* (including discourse competence, functional competence and design competence).

Essentially, the notion of ‘communicative competence’ or ‘communicative competences’ acts as a reminder that using languages accurately and appropriately involves much more than understanding grammatical rules. This being the case, it is necessary to develop approaches to the teaching of languages that ensure that there is adequate opportunity for learners to use the target language in genuinely meaningful ways (rather than simply to engage in decontextualized repetitive practice of language segments). It is this that led to the development of what is commonly referred to as ‘communicative language teaching’ (CLT) which is an overall approach to language teaching that can be associated with a range of different methodologies. Differences among learners need to be reflected in the variety of methods and materials employed.

Littlewood (1981) defined communicative language teaching in terms of four broad skill domains and three general principles. The skill domains were: *manipulation of the language system*; *ability to relate form and communicative function*; *understanding of the social meanings of linguistic forms*; and *strategic control in the use of language to communicate effectively in specific situations* (p. 6). The principles

were: *the communication principle* (involving the belief that activities that involve genuine communication promote learning); *the task principle* (carrying out meaningful tasks is regarded as important to language learning); and *the meaningfulness principle* (the learning process is supported to the extent that language is used meaningfully) (pp. 6, 77 & 78).

One of the best known definitions of communicative language teaching is that provided by Nunan (1991, pp. 279-295) which includes:

- emphasis on learning to communicate through interaction in the target language;
- introduction of authentic texts into the learning situation;
- provision of opportunities for learners to focus not only on language but also on the learning process itself;
- enhancement of the learner's own personal experiences as important contributing elements to classroom learning; and
- attempt to link classroom language learning with language activities outside the classroom.

It is important to be clear about the fact that 'authentic materials' does not necessarily, particularly in the early stages of language learning, mean materials that are/ were designed for purposes other than the teaching/ learning of languages. As Widdowson (1983, p. 30) has observed, the concept of authenticity should not be confused with that of genuineness: materials may be regarded as authentic so long as they are appropriate and accessible.

### **Preparing communicative lessons for very young learners: An example**

The expectation is that the Achievement Objectives (AOs) that appear at different levels will be included at the level at which they appear in the curriculum guidelines. However, depending on the context and the needs and interests of the students, they can also provide the foundation for lessons at higher or lower levels. They can, in addition, be divided up into a number of parts and/ or combined with other Achievement Objectives (from the same or different levels) and can be realized in the context of a wide range of topics, text-types and sociocultural themes.

The following lesson plan is based largely on an Achievement Objective that appears at level 1: *use and respond to simple classroom language*. It is important to note, however, that this is only one of many possible lessons that could relate to this Achievement Objective, each one of which could introduce and/or practise the type of language that might be used on a day-to-day basis in the classroom. It is relevant also to note that this lesson can also be related to an Achievement Objective that appears at level 6: *give and follow instructions*. Instructions can be simple or complex. The instruction-types that are introduced at level 6 are likely to be more complex. This lesson would be likely to occur as one of a sequence of lessons dealing with the topic of animals. Some of them would focus on themes of particular social or cultural relevance (e.g. ensuring that domestic animals are excluded from the *marae atea*); others (such as this one) may be socially and culturally relevant in a more general sense. In this case, the emphasis is on treating animals well and teaching them through the provision of praise and rewards.

The assumption here is that the learners have already been introduced to simple greetings in *te reo Māori*. They are re-introduced to one of these in the scene-setting section at the beginning of the lesson (where they meet the characters who appear in the lesson).

The pictures included in the main part of the lesson are intended to help the learners to understand the meaning of each utterance without the need for translation. In this way, and through the use of gestures and teaching aids (such as a toy dog), it should be possible to keep the use of English in the classroom to the absolute minimum without creating any comprehension problems. As a rule of thumb, we would recommend that English is used in this lesson, if at all, only in setting the scene at the very beginning and, if necessary, in helping the learners to understand what the final tasks involve.

Although the lesson can be presented verbally, with taped utterances being played to accompany each of the illustrations (or simply with the teacher saying each of the utterances initially), it can also be useful to provide students with a written version of the text that they can look at while listening to the tape (or the teacher's voice). Decisions about whether or not to focus on reading and writing as well as listening and speaking will depend on the existing competences of the learners.

The lesson is presented below in the form of instructions for teachers. Teachers who design their own lessons (which are often very simple to prepare and can make use of clipart collections for illustrative purposes) would be likely to follow a lesson plan (such as the one included at the end of this lesson). In this case, the lesson is presented in the form of the type of instructions that would be likely to appear in a teachers' guide.

### **The lesson: *Haere mai!***

#### Main teaching points

Giving instructions: *Haere atu! Hoki mai! E noho! E tū! Hoihoi!*

#### Vocabulary

Nouns: *kurī*

Adjectives: *pai*

#### Pronunciation

Associating vowel length and the macron (in the case of a focus on reading and writing as well as listening and speaking).

#### Revision

Greeting more than two people: *Tēnā koutou!*


Introducing yourself: *Ko . . . ahau.*


Praising: *Ka pai!*

Instructions: *Titiro mai! Whakarongo mai! Kōrero mai!*

### ***Stage 1: Setting the context for the lesson***

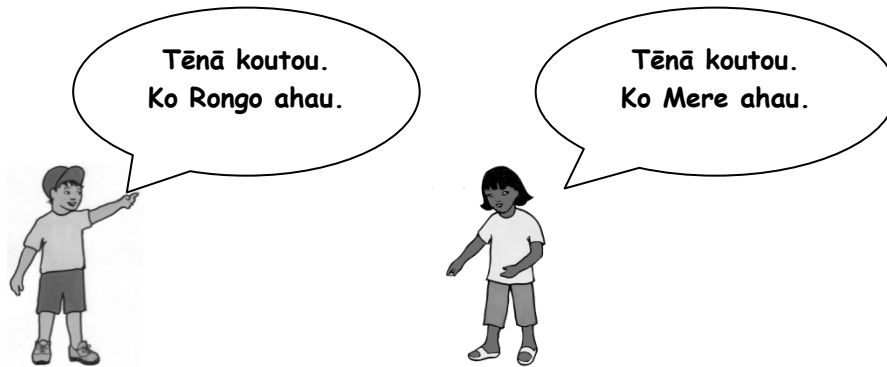
In this section, the learners meet the characters who will appear later in the lesson, using language with which they are already familiar.

Say '*titiro mai*' while pointing to a picture of eyes  and then to your eyes.

Say '*whakarongo mai*' while pointing to the picture of an ear  and then cupping

your hand round your ear.

Attach the following words and pictures (appropriately sized) to the whiteboard.



Facing the class, point to the speech bubble in the first picture and say:  
***Tēnā koutou. Ko Rongo ahau.***

Point to the speech bubble in the second picture and say:  
***Tēnā koutou. Ko Mere ahau.***

At this point, you could, if you wish, tell the learners in English that today's lesson is going to be about Rongo and Mere who have decided to teach their dogs to follow some simple instructions.

***Stage 2: Introducing and/or revising vocabulary***

This section of the lesson involves introducing (or revising) vocabulary that is relevant to the main part of the lesson. You will be introducing or revising the noun ***kurī***, the adjective ***pai*** and the phrase ***Ka pai!*** The instructions that make up the main part of the lesson (the new language) will be introduced later.

Attach the picture of a dog (appropriately sized) to the whiteboard with the word ***kurī*** beside it.



Cup your hand around your ear and say: ***Whakarongo mai!***  
Now point to your eyes and say ***Titiro mai!***

Point to the picture and say: ***He kurī.***

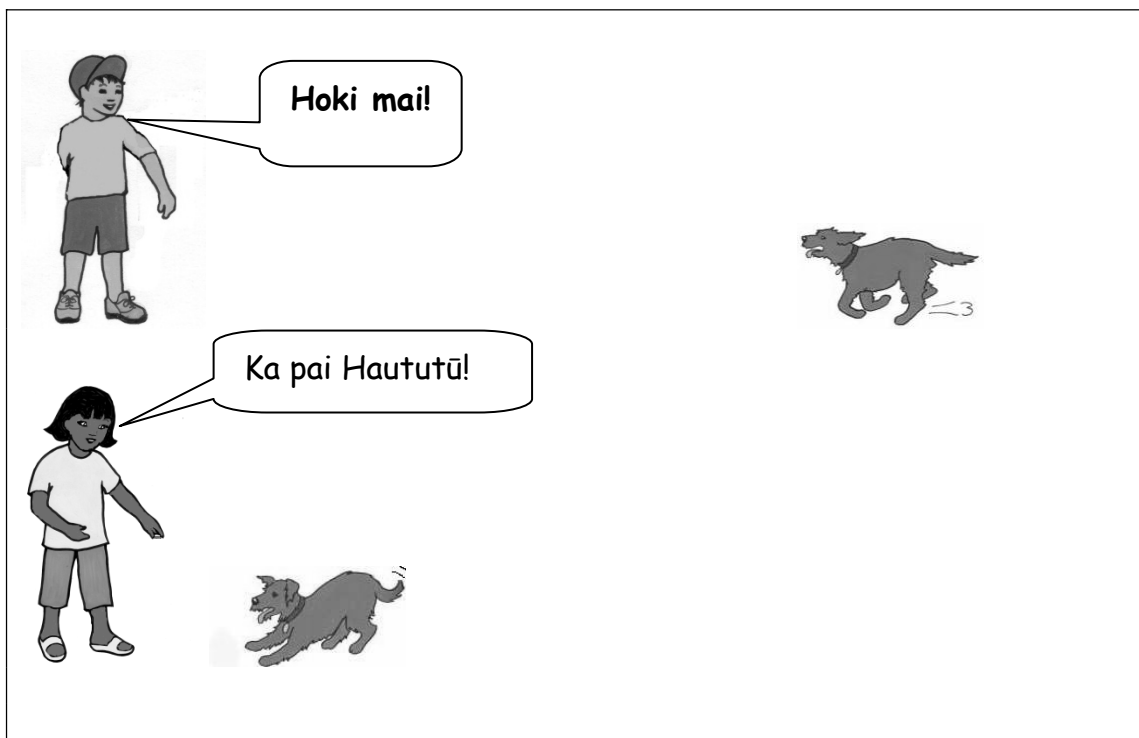
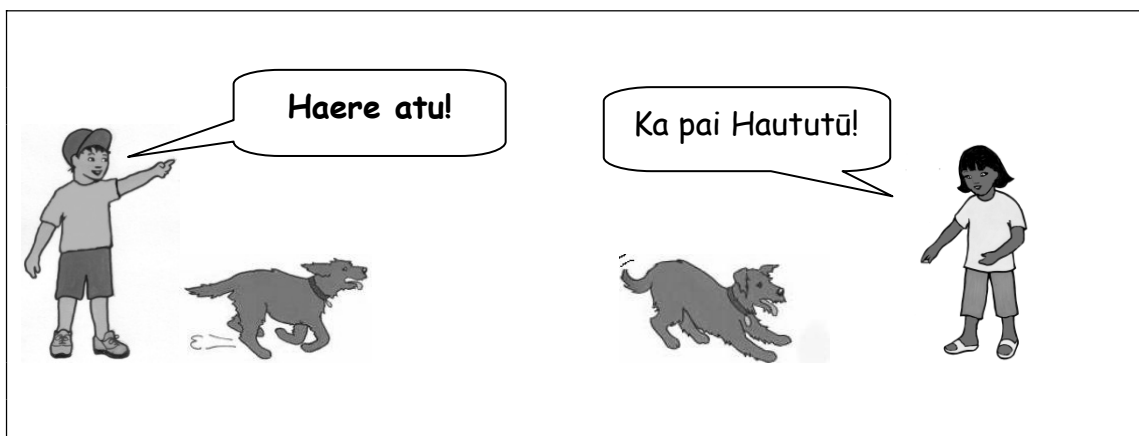
(Keep your language as simple as possible. **Avoid** asking the question *He aha tēnei?* This question form along with *tēnei* and *tēnā* can be introduced in a separate lesson.)

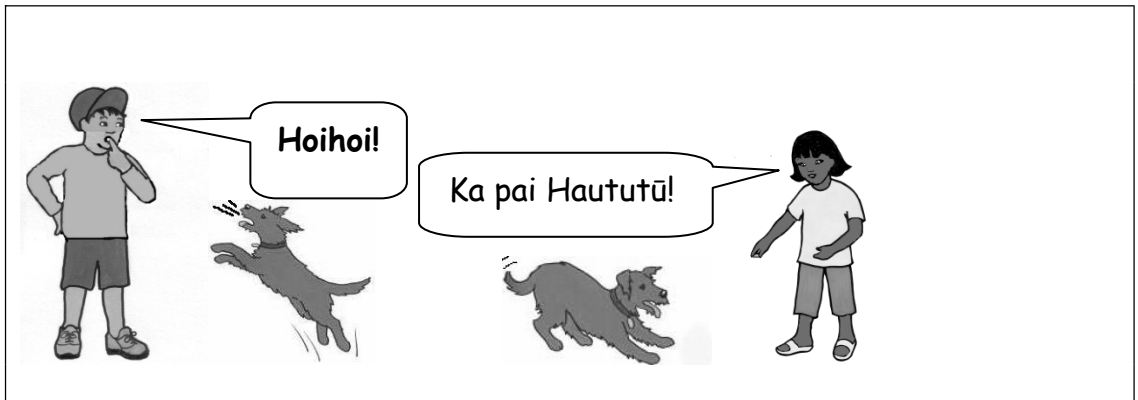
**Stage 3: Introducing the language associated with the teaching points**

This is the part of the lesson where we introduce the language associated with the main teaching points. At this stage, we are simply introducing the language in the context provided by the pictures where it is likely to be understood. The language introduced in this section, along with *Whakarongo mai!* and *Titiro mai!* which were introduced earlier, may be useful in the context of classroom management throughout the language programme.

Notice that you don't need to use written words. If you are focusing only on listening and speaking, you can have empty speech bubbles and simply say the words or use a tape recording.

Attach the pictures and words (appropriately sized) to the whiteboard in sequence.





At this stage of the lesson:

- read the picture story (or play a tape of the picture story), getting the learners to look at the pictures as you read;
- read the story again (or play a tape of the picture story again), getting the learners, if they are familiar with writing, to try to read the words as they listen or, if they are not yet familiar with writing, to look again at the pictures as you read;
- read the picture story for a third time (or play a tape of the picture story again), pausing before some of the words (e.g. before *Ka pai Haututū!*) and getting the learners to read them with you or, if they are able to, to repeat them from memory as you read. Help as much as necessary.

**Stage 4: Teaching the language and checking understanding**

The new language has been introduced in the context of a picture story. Now you need to teach the language associated with the teaching point and check understanding. A toy dog would be useful for this stage of the lesson.

Get the learners to look at the first picture of the text again. Now point away from you and say **Haere atu!** and make the toy dog run away from you.

Say **Kōrero mai!** and make an inclusive hand gesture around the class, getting everyone to say **Haere atu!** together (several times).

Pass the toy dog round the learners getting them to do what you did and say **Haere atu!**

Follow the same procedure for: **Hoki mai! E tū! E noho!** and **Hoihoi!**

Now you need to check understanding (concept checking).

Gesture to three of the learners to come up to the front of the class, saying **Hoki mai!** These learners are going to pretend to be the dog. You are going to give instructions. At this stage, use words only (without gestures) unless the students still need to have gestures associated with the words.

Give instructions in different sequences and get the learners to follow them (make sure you don't ask them to stand up if they aren't already sitting down or to come here if they are already here or to be quiet if they aren't making a noise though). Remember to say **Ka pai!** when the learners do the right thing.

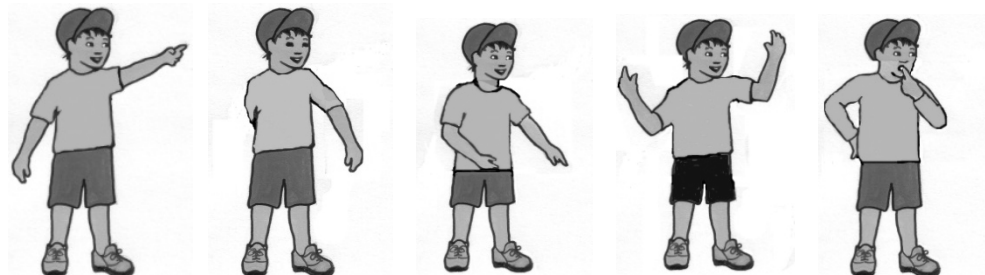
**Stage 5: Controlled practice**

The aim of this section of the lesson is to give the learners lots of opportunity to have fun practising things they have learned. Get the learners to work in pairs - with one giving instructions and the other (pretending to be a dog if you think this is appropriate) following them (and then reversing the roles).

**Stage 6: Freer practice**

The aim of this section of the lesson is to get the learners to select the language they want to use. This activity is appropriate only in the case of learners who have already been involved in reading and writing in *te reo Māori*. If this is not the case, omit this stage of the lesson.

Give each of the learners a large piece of cardboard (about A4 size). Make lots of copies of the pictures below cut out each one separately. Put them in a pile and get each student to select three.



Now let each learner choose three speech bubbles containing the words they will need

to match their pictures. They select from piles of the speech bubbles.



Their task is to make posters. They should stick their three pictures one below the other down the left hand side of their piece of cardboard and then stick the appropriate speech bubble next to each of the pictures. They should then draw beside each of the learners and speech bubbles a dog that has followed the instruction. You could also get them to write *Ka pai!* beside each of their dog pictures.






**Stage 7: Checking learning (assessment)**

Put the pictures below (appropriately sized) on the whiteboard. Then give the instructions several times in any order, getting the learners (together or individually) to say the number of the picture that illustrates each instruction you give (in Māori if they have already learned the numbers one to five) or to point to the appropriate picture. Remember to praise correct responses by saying *Ka pai!*



**Activities for subsequent lessons or for homework (optional)**

**1. Tahī:** Get the learners to match the pictures and the word numbers.

Pikitia	Nama
	
	
	
	
	

**1. Haere atu! 2. E tū! 3. Hoki mai! 4. E noho! 5. Hoihoi!**

**2. Rua:** Get learners to find words that match the pictures in the puzzle and then write them underneath the pictures.



\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **mai**

\_\_\_\_\_ **mai**



**Ka** \_\_\_\_\_!

\_\_\_\_\_!


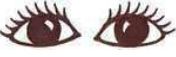




n	ō	m	p	n	g	u	h	ā	h	ī
g	w	h	a	k	a	r	o	n	g	o
k	h	u	i	u	n	p	i	g	r	p
u	ū	o	h	ō	m	ī	h	e	k	m
r	p	t	i	t	i	r	o	w	h	t
ī	n	k	w	h	ū	k	i	p	u	ā

The completed puzzle with the words highlighted is printed below.

n	ō	m	p	n	g	u	h	ā	h	ī
g	w	h	a	k	a	r	o	n	g	o
k	h	u	i	u	n	p	i	g	r	p
u	ū	o	h	ō	m	ī	h	e	k	m
r	p	t	i	t	i	r	o	w	h	t
ī	n	k	w	h	ū	k	i	p	u	ā

**3. Toru** Get the learners to try to complete the crossword puzzle.



1. E _____ ! 	1.  mai!
2. _____ ! 	3. E _____ ! 
4. _____  mai!	5. _____  atu!

					1					
2										
									3	
4	5		6							

The completed puzzle is printed below.

					<sup>1</sup> t	ū			
<sup>2</sup> h	o	i	h	o	i				
					t				
					i				<sup>3</sup> n
<sup>4</sup> w	<sup>5</sup> h	a	<sup>6</sup> k	a	r	o	n	g	o
		a			u				h
		e			r				o
		r			ī				
		e							

### The lesson plan

The following lesson plan outlines all that is necessary for the lesson outlined here.

Lesson Plan	
<b>Achievement objective/s</b>	Level 1: Use and respond to simple classroom language
<b>Outcomes</b>	By the end of the lesson, learners will be able to give, and respond appropriately to a number of simple instructions.
<b>Subsidiary aims</b>	The lesson will involve listening and speaking OR listening, speaking, reading and writing.
<b>Assumptions</b>	Learners will have already been introduced to simple greetings and introductions and to two instructions.
<b>Language focus</b>	Instructions: <i>Haere atu! Hoki mai! E noho! E tū! Hoihoi!</i>
<b>Vocabulary</b>	Noun: <i>kurī</i> . Adjective: <i>pai</i> .
<b>Pronunciation focus</b>	Focus on relationship between macron and long vowels (if the learners have already been introduced to reading and writing in Māori).
<b>Sociocultural aspect/s &amp; values</b>	Teaching animals to follow instructions/ commands through positive reinforcement.
<b>Topic/s</b>	Teaching dogs to obey instructions/commands.
<b>Text type/s</b>	Simple picture-based story sequence. Posters.
<b>Learning activities</b>	Decoding text (listening OR listening and reading); Practising giving instructions (listening and speaking); Practicing following instructions; Drawing pictures in response to spoken instructions (pictures only) or adding words to pictures or drawing pictures and adding words to make posters)
<b>Assessment activity</b>	Listening to instructions and ticking a picture-based answer sheet or pointing to appropriate pictures on the whiteboard.
<b>Resources</b>	Pictures; word bubbles; pieces of A4 cardboard; pens or pencils.
Lesson staging	
<b>Stage 1</b>	Set the context for the lesson
<b>Stage 2</b>	Introduce/ revise vocabulary: <i>kurī</i> ; <i>pai</i>
<b>Stage 3</b>	Introduce the language associated with the teaching points – introduce text (picture-based story sequence), includes the instructions that are the primary focus of the lesson.
<b>Stage 4</b>	Teach the new language and check understanding.
<b>Stage 5</b>	Controlled practice activity - listening and speaking: Learners give and follow instructions in pairs.
<b>Stage 6</b>	Freer practice activity (optional) - Making posters
<b>Stage 7</b>	Assessment: Listening to instructions and ticking a picture-based answer sheet or pointing to appropriate illustrations on the whiteboard.
<b>Stage 8</b>	Tasks for subsequent lesson or homework (optional): Matching words and pictures; Word puzzle; Crossword puzzle.

**What are the communicative characteristics of this lesson?**

Let's think again about the advice provided in the curriculum guidelines. First, teachers are advised (p. 23) that:

*Communicative language teaching is teaching that enables students to engage in meaningful communication in the target language. Such communication has a function over and above that of language learning itself.*

In the case of this lesson, the imperative construction in Māori is presented in a context in which they would naturally occur and the learners are encouraged to use the language in that context of giving instructions.

How closely does the lesson follow the advice given in the curriculum guidelines (p. 24)?

*Te reo Māori [should be] used as much as possible in the learning environment*

The lesson is designed in such a way as to ensure that there is little need to use English. The illustrations are carefully selected to ensure that translation is not necessary in order for meaning to be conveyed.

*Interactive, learner-centred tasks [should be] central to the programme.*

The lesson includes lots of tasks that are appropriate for young learners. In several of these, the learners work together giving and following instructions.

*Language structures [should be] introduced and practised in meaningful contexts.*

In the lesson, imperative constructions are introduced and practiced in a context (training dogs) that has meaning for young learners.

*Non-verbal aspects of communication [should be] included in the programme.*

In this case, the context has been carefully chosen so that gestures that help the learners to understand the meaning of the utterances can be used appropriately, that is, in the context of training dogs. In this case, the inclusion of gestures is largely a matter of methodology. The advice in the curriculum guidelines document is intended largely to refer to non-verbal aspects of communication (such as *hongi*) that are culturally specific.

*Students develop a range of different language learning strategies.*

In the case of this lesson, the learners are encouraged to pay careful attention to the illustrations. Attending to the interaction between illustrations and words can be a useful language learning strategy, particularly in the early stages of language learning.

*Students' language learning strategies [should] include strategies for engaging with unfamiliar language.*

All of the new language takes the form of instructions. Two of these begin with activity verbs ('haere' and 'hoki'). One ends with the directional particle 'mai', signalling direction towards the speaker (*Hoki mai!*). The other ends with the directional particle 'atu', signalling direction away from the speaker (*Haere atu!*). The replacement (*mai/ atu*), combined with the clear directional indications in the illustrations, helps the learners to begin to associate parts of the utterance with particular general meanings. These meanings will become more specific as the learners begin to make connections with utterances to which they have already been introduced (*Titiro mai!*; *Whakarongo mai!* *Kōrero mai!*) and encounter further examples later in their course. Two of the examples begin with 'e', a particle that is used in commands before verbs that have one long vowel or two short vowels. Once again, further exposure to a range of examples will allow learners to gradually begin to associate the initial 'e' particle with certain contexts of use. With older learners, teachers may wish to refer to the rule at some stage (but not in a way that disrupts the progress of lessons whose focus is language acquisition).<sup>2</sup>

*Language [should be] presented in a way that encourages students to look for patterns and rules.*

As indicated above, the new language is made up of instructions presented together in a way that highlights similarities and differences among them and between two of them and two instructions that were introduced earlier. At first, the learners will almost certainly use the language in a formulaic way. Gradually, however, if the examples to which they are introduced initially are selected carefully, the learners will become aware of the fact that different segments carry different meanings, particularly if appropriate gestures and/ or visual aids are used as the different segments are articulated.

### **Conclusion**

Effective language courses are generally characterized by: the inclusion of lots of revision; the careful selection of new language (so as to highlight similarities and differences and build on existing competences); the embedding of new language in contexts that are meaningful (make sense to learners) and authentic (have relevance outside of the classroom); provide a context for further meaningful activities; and include relevant social and cultural references. With all of this in place, it should be possible, from the very beginning, even with very young learners, to avoid that form of teaching through translation that so often characterizes lessons that have not been carefully thought through in advance. Using some readily available resources (such as toys, everyday objects, pictures cut out of magazines and clipart), teachers can prepare effective lessons that learners will enjoy.

### **Endnotes**

1. For a discussion of the interaction between CLT and Māori pedagogy, see Nock and Crombie (2009)
2. Notice that we have not used 'e' with 'hoki mai' although it would have been possible to do so. At this stage, it is better that learners should be able to make a direct link between *Haere mai* and *Hoki atu*.

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