

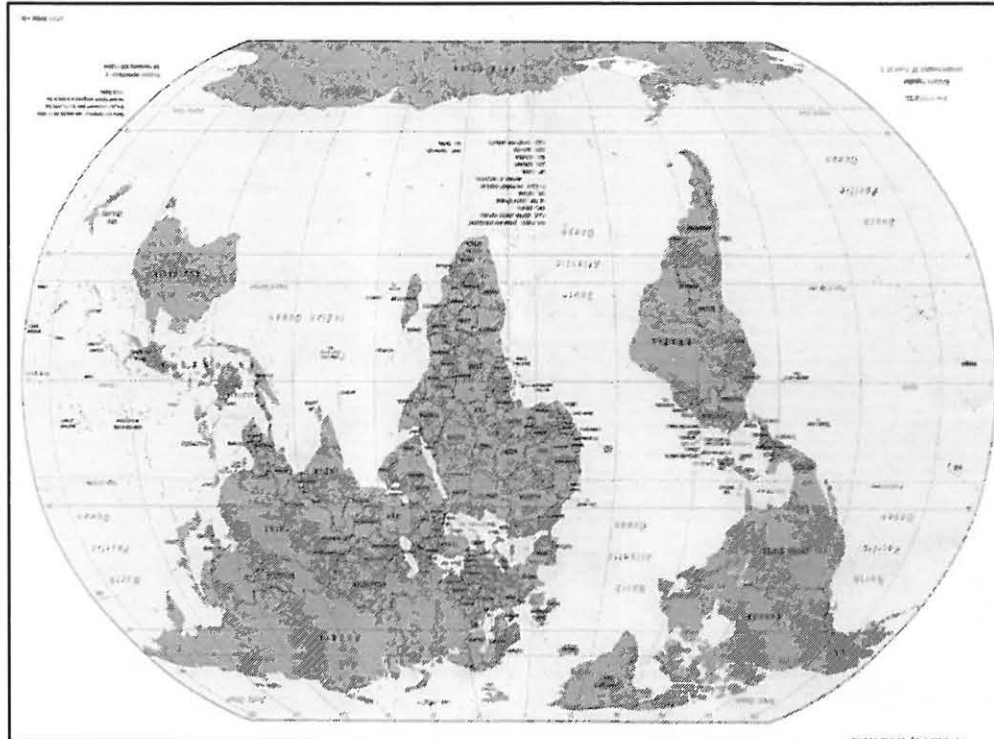


E rau rangatira mā tēnā koutou katoa. He mihi kau ana ki te mana whenua, ki a Ngāti Haua, ki a Ngāti Wairere. Ki a Taupiri maunga, ki a Waikato iwi, ki a Waikato awa. Ka mihi hoki ki a Kīngi Tūheitia me te Kahui Ariki.

E ngā manuhiri tūārangi, nō Iceland, nō Sweden, nō Scotland nō Australia, tēnā koutou, tae noa ki a tatou katoa mai i ngā pito o te motu. E aku hoa o POET, e ngā kaiwhakahaere o tēnei huihuinga, Vanessa, Sally, tēnā koutou. Tino rawe te hui nei, nā kourua i tūtuki te wawata. He uri tenei o Te Mahurehure o Ngāpuhi nui tonu, o Te Atiawa, o ngā moutere o Airangi, o Ingarangi hoki. He honore kia tū ki mua i a koutou i tēnei ata.

Greetings everyone, especially to our POET guests who have come from across the world or across the ditch. Its been wonderful meeting you and getting to know you and that these relationships are going to keep growing.

I want to acknowledge the hard work of all our POET colleagues and especially Vanessa and Sally to make this POET exchange such a success. Right from the first time Sally and Vanessa talked to me about POET, they have been passionate about ensuring space for Indigenous researchers and indigenous research agendas and this conference is a reflection of their commitment to that. While the name of this conference has its origins in the wise sayings of a leader, a King who came from this area, it also provides a link to one of our tribal sayings Ngāpuhi Kōhao rau.



From my father, I'm from Ngapuhi territory, what's described as the far north, its not as far far far north as some of you come from. I'm also from Taranaki, and on my mother's side I'm from Ireland, England and France.

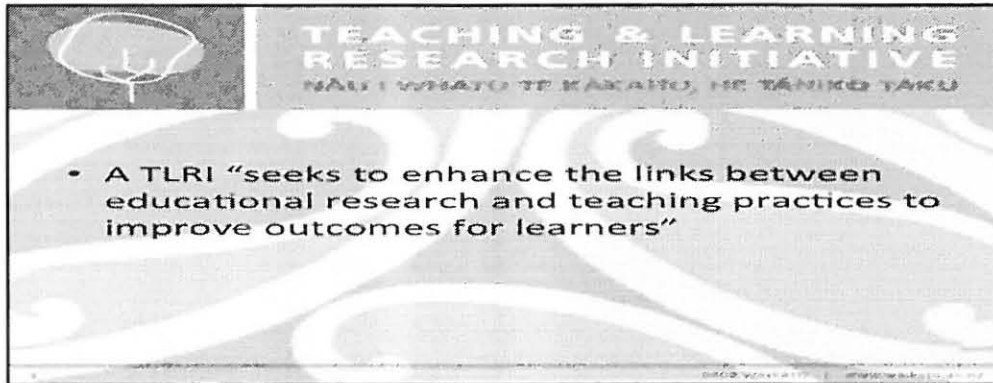
I want to give just a little geography lesson, because its important for transitions. Transitions is not just about moving from one physical space to another but also involves moving across worldviews.

While this is place is understood as being in the North Island of New Zealand, you are actually on a fish - Te Ika a Maui, the fish of Maui. Down here you will see Te Upoko o te Ika, the fish of the Ika. This map should actually be this way around. And you can see that the north island is actually a whai or a stingray. The northern part where I come from is the ika a Maui, the tail of Maui.

In the Māori language one of the words for north is raro and raro also means below or underneath. My children all spoke Māori as their first language and you will hear them say, even in English, that they are going down to Waima from Auckland or they are coming up to the East Coast from Hamilton. That is the worldview their first language has given them.

This is how world maps should look. And you can see our Aussie neighbours, we are not Down Under, we are actually on the top of the world. And some of us are on the top of rugby as well – by the way, the Chiefs won last night.

So now that i have helped you to transition to a Māori world view of where we are,



Riariakina ō Rongo Hirikapo that I am actually here to talk about is also about transitions. Riariakina ō rongo hirikapo – refers to lifting up or raising your senses, consciousness, intellect. It is a Teaching and Learning Initiative that is in its very early days. TLRI is a fund that we can apply to research with our colleagues in educational settings. The final okay to go public on the latest round of successful TLRI's was only given last month, if this conference had been a month earlier I wouldn't be able to stand here and talk about this project. The study focuses on transitions from Māori medium preschool settings to Māori medium school settings. There is relatively little research on the transition experiences of tamariki and their whānau in Māori medium education contexts. This is so even though transition to kura is of major significance to both kōhanga and kura. Successful transitions to kura for children in kōhanga reo settings are a critical factor in efforts to ensure the continuation of our reo, our language. We have had clear evidence right from the first days of kōhanga that efforts to regenerate te reo Māori in kōhanga reo and in Māori medium early childhood settings can be lost at a school gate. If our kōhanga babies didn't get to schools that taught through Māori they soon stopped speaking Māori.

In this study the learners are of course the children moving from kōhanga and kura. Riariakina ō rongo hirikapo is about research and teaching working together to improve these children's learning. But in kōhanga and kura which have a language regeneration imperative, 'learners' is an inclusive term – learners can be parents and other family members, learners can be teachers, learner can be researchers because so many of us are second language learners of Māori.

The research question



Pēhea rā te āhuatanga me te kounga o ngā whakawhitinga mai i te kōhanga ki te kura mō ngā tamariki, whānau, kaiako me te hapori?

What do effective transitions from kōhanga to kura look like, feel like, and sound like, for tamariki, whānau, kaiako and the community?

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The overarching research question for this therefore focuses not only on children, but also whānau - family, on kaiako - teachers and on hāpori - community.

The Māori worldview reinforces *links between all our senses*. It reinforces our links to seen and unseen aspects of our world. Rongo is the Maori kupu, the Māori word for taste, it is also the word for hear, for feel. Tairongo - tairongo wairua - refers to the power of intuition, that sometimes outweighs that of conscious reasoning, Rongo is about using all our senses, including intuition to try and understand.

The overarching question reminds us, urges us, to use all our senses to identify and understand effective transitions in Māori educational environments.



The project has been initiated by a kōhanga and kura whānau. They came up with the initial idea and plan. They came up with the guiding research question.

The kōhanga and kura sit side by side up the road from here and some of our POET colleagues have visited them. Both have been acknowledged for their success in kaupapa Māori immersion education and for providing quality educational outcomes for tamariki Māori and their whānau. While they sit side by side and while there are procedures in place such as visits to the kura before starting, kaiako in both settings believe a transition programme would be beneficial to ensure and more seamless transition across the two sites and to strengthen learning and the curriculum on both sites. From here an idea for this Project—**Riariakina ō rongō hirikapo**—came to be.

Those of you who were here for Donn Ratana's amazing kōrero on Friday will know that a cup of tea has great cultural significance to us, and is also an important part of Māori research ethics. My involvement in this research came to pass because of a cup of tea.

The kōhanga and kura got in touch with colleagues here and I happened to be having a cup of tea when one of them, Margaret Carr, was getting ready to go and meet with the kōhanga principal about their idea. As I was stirring my cup of tea Margaret asked me to come to the kōhanga with her. Long story short, the power of the cup of tea has also resulted in my becoming the grant holder for this research project.

So this is a collaborative cross-sector project, involving kōhanga, kura and Waikato University. Here is most of the research team, Two from the kōhanga, Manu and Tere who is the kōhanga principal are missing along with our English rose Sally.

Tirau in the front is another of the kōhanga teacher researchers, theirs our Vanessa, and at the back are the kura researchers, teacher Dorie and principal Laura.



As I've already said, transition is of major significance to both kōhanga and kura. Transitions express the aspirations families have for retaining Māori language and culture for their children and for themselves. These aspirations led to the first kura kaupapa Māori in the 80s. The first kura sites developed out of kōhanga whānau desires for their tamariki to experience ongoing kaupapa Māori education through te reo Māori. In this sense the kura whānau and kōhanga whānau were and often still are one and the same. Transitions could be relatively seamless in terms of a shared kaupapa and vision. This is the kōhanga-kura whānau our whānau belongs to. Once they have you there is no escape!

Transition from early childhood education to schooling has been described as *Crossing the border* by researchers of the transition from ECE to school. For our children, back in the day, transition to kōhanga meant running around the tennis court from the kōhanga to the kura. It wasn't unusual for children to head to kura early, still 4 years old if they were hōhā with kōhanga, or kōhanga was hōhā with them. And it wasn't unusual for the school-aged children to head back in the other direction, when they first started kura but missed the safety and kōhanga kai - food.

As one whānau



Example 5.2 Te Kura, Te Koohanga Reo and three mothers with infants are gathered at Te Koohanga Reo on a Wednesday morning. Inoi ki te Atua, Hiimene, Inoi Whakamutunga, Waiata Tawhito and Mihimihi have taken place. One of the pouako (teachers, known as Whaea or Matua) asks the children what day this is and what is the specific kaupapa (purpose) of this day. A number of children (Ch) including a ten year old kura boy (B), reply.

Wh He aha teenei raa?

Ch Wenerei!

Wh Wenerei. He aha te kaupapa o te raa o te Wenerei?

Ch Me haere ki te Koohanga,

Wh Kia ora.

B ki te, ki te whakanautia te Koohanga me te Kura.

Whaea follows up and supports this recognition of 'Whanaungatanga',

Wh ki te whakakotahi te whaanau tamariki, nee? Whakakotahi anoo te whaanau.

(Hohepa, 1990, p.63)

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Back in the days this photo was taken the kura kids went across to the kōhanga kids every Wednesday.

This excerpt is out of my masters thesis from over 20 years ago that examined language and cultural socialisation in a kōhanga on one of those Wednesdays. It reflects how the kōhanga and kura were seen as one family, transition was not a major concern back then.



Rather than crossing a border, transition from the *kōhanga* and *kura* in this study can be understood physically and metaphorically as going through the gate.

The two are separated by a small gate like this.

The *kōhanga* and *kura* down the road described very similar experiences to the ones my family experienced in the past – the principals and teachers who had been there for a considerable time described similar practices as shared *karakia* or blessing times to begin and end a day and that they had a lot of interaction as effectively a large family unit.


However, a number of changes have happened since then, which have impacted on transitions today.

These include the development of curriculum documents, *Te Whāriki* which TKRONK implements and *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* which the *kura* implements.

What we plan to do




- Survey other Waikato kura and kōhanga to find out about their transition programmes
- Develop the akoranga whakawhiti—transitions programme
- Plan from a blend of *e Whāriki*, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and *Te Marautanga-ā-Kura*.
- Collect information through classroom observations and learning portfolios, formal interviews and informal conversations with children
- Interview parents/whānau and teachers about their experiences and views of transitions

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Takarangi action inquiry cycle

- Action research is often a process of 'spirals on spirals' as aspects or findings may emerge that result in an exploration down a path that was not initially anticipated (McNiff, 1988)
- Findings or links to new aspects may result in changes to, or additional spirals within, the inquiry.
- The takarangi is made up of spirals on spirals. It is at least a three-dimensional carved form, which means that there will always be aspects that are seen and unseen.



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Metaphors are very important in Māori worldview

We look for things in our environment that capture the essence of what we are trying to do or say.

The takarangi brings in the notion of expected and unexpected pathways as the koru or spirals grow out of another and take new directions.

I talked earlier about the importance of seen and unseen in the Māori worldview and the importance of using all our senses.

Analysis will involve



- Teachers holding research hui up to twice a term to share and discuss information and data that they collect about teaching and learning in the transition programme
- Analysing interviews thematically to identify key factors that facilitate, or impede, effective transitions from kōhanga to kura.
- Analysing programme documents, classroom observations and research hui discussions to identify ways in which learning areas are integrated in planning, and compare these with ideas and theories that emerge out of research hui discussions, and with actual practices

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Dorie has found that transitioning tamariki are getting hungry before kai breaks. At kura tamariki get milk 4 times a week which does help a bit. As part of self-review Kōhanga might think about stretching the time before kai for tuakana group.

Kōhanga thinking about tamariki close to transition eating from own pouaka kai, rather than in a shared kai arrangement.

Kura has found some tamariki not eating when they first come across to Te Aroha Tau.

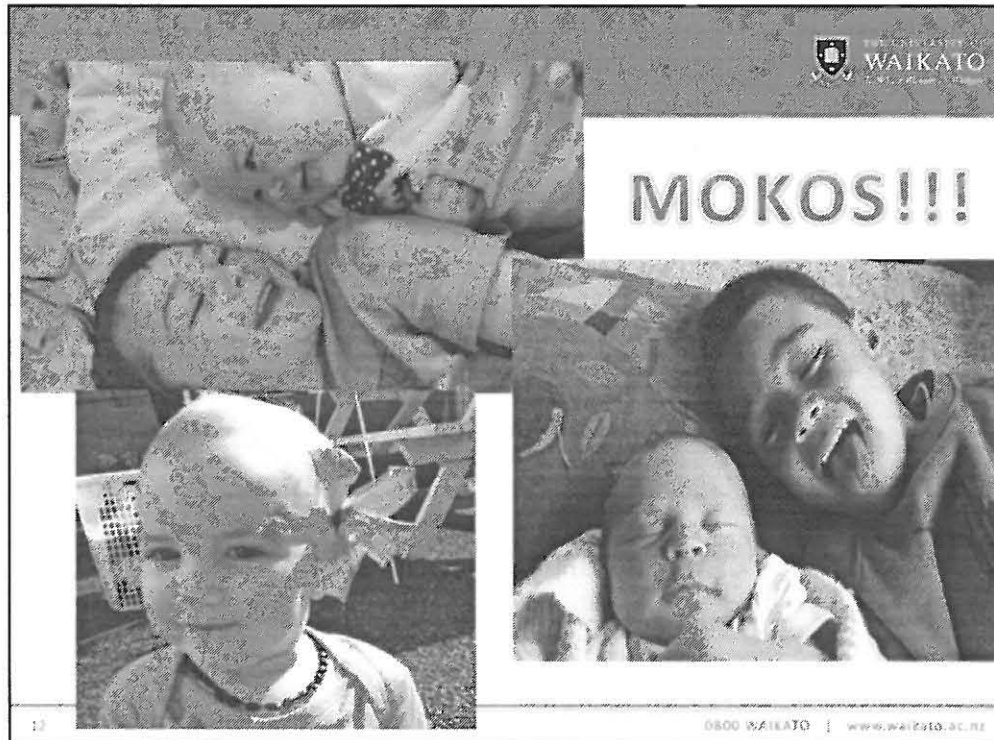
Dorie has noted a greater appreciation for tidying up of activities and toys etc in her room, and that tamariki are coming over from Kōhanga where there is an emphasis on play to the structured environment of Kura.

Very early days. We are basically just starting out on the research.

The importance of existing relationship – getting to the mahi fast, cos already know each other, trust each other, a relationship based on honesty and openness.

Nō reira e hoa mā, me mutu au i konei, ka haere tonu te mahi.

So my friends, I must stop here but the work goes on.



Now I am karani, a grandmother to these 5 beautiful mokopuna, grandchildren.

One attends a KKM, a full immersion school, 2 are in kōhanga or puna reo – Māori medium early childhood contexts and 1 goes to an English medium primary school. What I want for them as a grandmother hasn't changed greatly from what I wanted for my own children. Except now its taken on even greater significance. If I was a concerned parent, the concern I had for my children's education and future pales into insignificance when it come to my mokos! They are now definitely the primary drivers for my research these days.