

The Māori language revitalisation agenda and *Te Whakapiki Reo* & *Te Whakapiki i te Reo*: Meeting the needs of teachers
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Abstract

Since 1994, and under contract to the New Zealand Ministry of Education, the University of Waikato has provided teacher professional development programmes in the context of *kaupapa mātauranga Māori*. Because these programmes are designed to play a role in the Māori language revitalisation agenda as it relates to the teaching and learning of te reo Māori in school contexts, we believe that it is important to share our experiences with others. In this article, we discuss the context in which these programmes are delivered, some of the ways in which they have changed over time, and what we have learned from them.

Introduction: Origin of the *Te Whakapiki Reo* and *Te Whakapiki i te Reo Māori* programmes

In 1991 the Ministry of Education developed a 10 point plan to improve Māori education and support the efforts in the revitalisation of te reo Māori. As part of the plan the development of Māori curriculum documents, written in Māori and specifically for schools in Māori Language Immersion, began. Prior to 1991 there were no national curriculum documents for such schools. At that stage in the evolution of Māori education through the medium of te reo Māori, a large number of the teachers were second language learners and were presented with limited opportunities for professional development to improve their language proficiency and their knowledge of the new curriculum documents (written in Māori). The first three documents produced in draft form were released for trial in 1994 and in that same year the University of Waikato approached the New Zealand Ministry of Education with a proposal designed to offer support and professional development to teachers in *Kura Kaupapa Māori* and *Rumaki* classes (Total Immersion). The programme (referred to then as *Te Whakapiki Reo*) was initially designed in a way that involved the integration of *Kaupapa Mātauranga Māori* and an existing, and very successful, programme designed for teachers of English (see Johnson and Rolleston, 2001). It began as an intensive one term total immersion programme for teachers of te reo Māori who were already highly proficient speakers of the language. In 1996, the documents were finalised and the programme was modified and developed as *Te Whakapiki i Reo Māori*. The course was expanded to 20 weeks and many of the teachers gaining entry to the course had a lower level of proficiency, some at beginner level.

The context

The early *Whakapiki Reo* programmes were run through the University of Waikato's Language Institute. Although the programmes themselves were conducted through the medium of te reo Māori, the general environment was not one in which Māori was

the usual medium of day-to-day communication. Since 1996, however, *Te Whakapiki i te Reo* programmes have been run through *Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao* (the University's School of Māori and Pacific Development) where the use of te reo Māori in every-day and academic contexts is the norm.

Te Whakapiki i te Reo Māori programmes delivered by the University of Waikato have continued to evolve and other institutions have introduced programmes with similar aims and objectives. So far as the programmes delivered by the University of Waikato are concerned, the core principles and the focus on te reo Māori have remained although the participant profile has changed. In particular, there have been fewer participants with a high level of proficiency in te reo Māori in recent programmes. This is of particular concern in view of the fact that the demand for teachers with a high level of proficiency in te reo Māori is steadily increasing, with, for example, *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga 2004*, reporting an increase of 14.9% in Level 2 immersion enrolments over the last three years (Ministry of Education, 2005). As May and Hill (2003) observe, "there is a high likelihood that many of these programmes are not teaching sufficiently through te reo Māori as the target language".

Staff of *Te Whakapiki i te Reo* programmes at the University of Waikato continue to deliver their programmes through the medium of te reo Māori even though the overall entry level proficiency of participants is lower than it was when these programmes were first introduced. In doing so, they provide participants with an ongoing demonstration of the techniques that can be used to assist learners to understand discourse conducted in a language in which they do not yet have a high level of proficiency. Teaching practice also continues to be central to the programmes and participants are required to undertake a teaching practice section involving putting into practice what they have learned.¹ This section is conducted in schools within the Waikato area. Ideally, however, these teaching practice sessions should be conducted in their own classrooms, but distance often prevents this from occurring. Also continuing to be fundamental to the programmes are second language learning theory and pedagogy and the interpretation and implementation of relevant New Zealand curriculum documents and resources as well as the creation of new resources. More recently, the relevance of developing skills in classroom-based action research has been given greater emphasis.

Te Whakapiki i te Reo in the Context of Kaupapa Mātauranga Māori

Kaupapa Mātauranga Māori is a multifaceted concept but in a general sense it involves learning within an environment that practises the principles of *whanaungatanga* (family, tribal and land connections), *manaakitanga* (caring and respect for people and land), and *aroha* (love, respect, valuing others), while nurturing *wairua* (spiritual essence). It involves a body of knowledge that is distinctive to Māori in that it derives fundamentally from Māori epistemologies that include complex relationships and ways of organising society (Pihama, 2001). However, although the general sense of *kaupapa mātauranga Māori* is common to all *iwi*, each *iwi* and *hapū* have their own interpretations, referring to the richness of their own tribal teachings and philosophies in putting it into practice. So far as our programmes are concerned, *kaupapa mātauranga Māori* is interpreted as involving those aspects of Māori knowledge and philosophies that are embedded in the *marau Māori* (Māori curriculum documents), and the principles stated in *Ngā Haeata Mātauranga* (Ministry of Education, 2005). In keeping with the Māori concept of *mahinga*

ngatahi tauutuutu (collaboration and co-operation), a consultative and collaborative development process model is employed, one that provides for the identification of individual needs and skills and the opportunity to share strengths with others and to seek assistance from others in areas of weakness. Participants are invited to discuss their own development goals with the team (staff and other participants), and there is ongoing review of the extent to which the programme is contributing to the achievement of these goals. There is also contact with the schools where participants teach (mainstream *Rumaki*, *Kura Kaupapa Māori* and, occasionally, *Kōhanga Reo*) and, wherever possible, with *iwi* and *hapū* with which participants associate. In this way, the needs and aspirations of communities as well as those of individual teachers are kept in sight.

Kaupapa mātauranga Māori involves linking with *iwi*, *hapū* and *whānau* and taking advice from *kaumātua* (elders). During the time that *Te Whakapiki Reo* and *Te Whakapiki i te Reo* programmes have operated at the University of Waikato, a large network of contacts has been built up. These range from contact with various schools and *marae* to individuals with an interest in education. In terms of *tikanga*, *reo* and Māori pedagogy, we have established links with *Te Panekirekiretanga o te Reo* through respected *kaumātua* and this provides us also with an indirect link with *Te Taura Whiri* (Māori Language Commission). The programmes have also benefited from input from other University staff, including staff from outside of *Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao*.

The overall aims of the programmes

The overall aims of *Te Whakapiki Reo* and *Te Whakapiki i te Reo* programmes have been to:

- increase participants' overall proficiency in *te reo* Māori and their proficiency in each of the four skill areas: *pānui* (reading), *tuhituhi* (writing), *whakarongo* (listening) and *kōrero* (speaking);
- increase participants' capacity to teach through the medium of *te reo* Māori in a range of discourse contexts, including increasing the range of their vocabulary in curriculum areas and their knowledge and understanding of *reo ōkawa* (formal language) and *reo ōpaki* (informal language), including the use of *whakataukī* (proverbial sayings), *kīwaha* (idioms) and *kupu whakarite* (metaphoric language);
- increase participants' language awareness through activities designed to sensitise them to the structure and functioning of *te reo* Māori;
- increase participants' knowledge and understanding of second language learning and teaching methodologies and strategies (including error correction strategies) appropriate for immersion and bilingual contexts;
- increase participants' awareness of, and ability to adapt to their own context, existing teaching resources and assessment tools, including the web-based resource *Te Kete Ipurangi*;
- increase participants' capacity to create communicative tasks to support language learning and assessment;
- improve participants' own literacy skills and their ability to foster literacy development in their students;
- increase participants' ability to reflect productively on their own practice.

All of these aims are related to the overarching aim of improving the quality of teaching and learning. Fundamental to the programme are both *Whakapakari Reo* (fluency development) and *Whakangungu Reo* (acquisition of the skills required to analyse language and to put that ability to use in teaching communicatively).

Murdoch (1994) reports that what second language learners value most in any pre- or in-service training programme is the opportunity to improve their own language proficiency. All *Te Whakapiki Reo* and *Te Whakapiki i te Reo* programmes to date have aimed to improve the language proficiency of participants. However, they have all also aimed to address a range of issues involved in teaching te reo Māori and in teaching through the medium of te reo Māori. As indicated above, these include the planning, design, delivery, assessment and evaluation of lessons and the interpretation and implementation of Ministry of Education curriculum documents and materials as well as the principles involved in the creation of new materials.

Te Whakapiki i te Reo: Philosophy of in-service provision

We believe that programmes such as *Te Whakapiki i te Reo* have an important role to play in the ongoing development of teachers' knowledge and skills base. Central to our approach to these programmes is a philosophy that underlies all of our professional development activities. It is, as many educators including, for example, Guskey (1986) and Joyce & Showers (1988) have argued, that the ultimate goal should be to improve student learning. This is at the centre of our approach, an approach which emphasises the importance of participants becoming self-directed in their efforts. They should, after the programme is over, have the attitudes and skills required to continue to improve their own proficiency in te reo Māori, their teaching of te reo Māori, and their teaching through the medium of te reo Māori. Whilst *kaupapa mātauranga Māori* sees *whānau*, *hapū* and *iwi* as playing a very significant role in the revitalisation of te reo Māori, the teacher's role is also currently a very important one and, ultimately, it is a teacher's own motivation that will make the difference. Teachers, however, need to be supported in their efforts by *whānau*, *hapū* *iwi* and other educators.

Wilde (1996) states that "professional development should include rich and varied opportunities that engage practitioners as learners and offer the opportunity to apply new skills and knowledge". We endorse this view. However, we also believe that what is communicated to participants as best practice should be demonstrated in action. Thus, our model is one that incorporates theory-demonstration-practice-feedback and follow-through (as advocated by Joyce and Showers (1988)). Programme facilitators do not simply *discuss* theory and practice, they *demonstrate* good practice in their own teaching and encourage participants to provide them with ongoing feedback.

The vast majority of teachers appear to believe that school students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning. We believe that this is something that should apply to everyone. We therefore encourage participants to identify their weaknesses as well as their strengths and to become self-directed learners, developing strategies for the improvement of their own language skills as well as their own teaching skills. Effective classroom practitioners reflect on their own teaching and learning and this reflection plays an important role in change and development. We therefore encourage participants to become reflective practitioners,

providing them with frameworks for reflection on their own classroom practices. Because we also believe that effective classroom practitioners are interested in one another's teaching practice and are able, and willing, to provide others with constructive criticism, participants are required to contribute to the creation of a non-threatening environment in which they can observe one another's teaching and provide praise and constructive criticism of it.

Teaching professionals need opportunities to revitalise their teaching by engaging with other teaching professionals in the critical discussion and examination of their attitudes and beliefs as well as their practices. Participants arrive with different experiences, skills and knowledge and are encouraged to use all of this in setting the agenda for parts of the programme and in seeking the opinions and advice of others on professional matters of particular significance to them. This type of approach is conducive to the *kaupapa Māori* concept of *tātou, tātou* (inclusiveness). Furthermore, it provides a context in which participants are able to "build upon the current foundation of basic skills, knowledge and areas of expertise" (Wilde, 1996), linking new knowledge and experience to existing knowledge and experience.

Overall, we believe that professional learning must be ongoing, flexible and supportive and must meet the needs of participants. Only then will professional development "change the culture of learning for both the teacher and the student so that engagement and betterment become a way of life in schools" (Fullan & Stiegelbauer, 1991). Thus, it is not only "important that teachers should return to their schools at the end of their professional development programme refreshed and keen to make an improvement to their programmes. It is equally important that these improvements should be evident to others" (Johnson & Rolleston, 1999).

Approach to te reo Māori and to the teaching and learning of te reo Māori

Ko te reo te hā, te mauri o te Māoritanga

Māori language is a *taonga* that has been bestowed upon us by our ancestors and guaranteed to Māori people under the Treaty of Waitangi; it is the essence of our culture and of our very being. All languages and cultures are inextricably entwined, each with its own identity, its own sacredness and its own *Aho Matua*. Without te reo Māori, the culture will undoubtedly become weak and eventually disappear. *Ko te reo te iho o te ahurea* (language is the life-line of culture).

He reo e kōrerotia ana, he reo ka ora

A living language is a spoken language. While te reo Māori is no longer considered an endangered language, concern about the levels of proficiency of speakers remains. According to *Māori Language Strategy Report 2003* (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2003, p. 15), only 9% of Māori adults have a high level of spoken proficiency in te reo and the number of Māori speakers now stands at 25% of the Māori population. Many young adults and second language learners are clustered at the lower end of the proficiency range and their language, even that of those who are learning in immersion settings, is often characterised by errors of omission, addition, selection and ordering (Houia, 2002).

*Ma te kōrero i te reo ka ora
Ma re ora o te reo ka rangatira*

We believe that learners reach higher levels of competence in te reo Māori when they are actively engaged in the language, that is, when they are taking part in activities that involve listening, speaking, reading and writing about subjects that they find genuinely interesting and relevant. As students learn to use the resources of the Māori language, including its structures and vocabulary, with increasing accuracy and appropriateness in relevant, meaningful contexts, their confidence in using it beyond the protected environment of the school grows. Related to this belief is our commitment to communicative language teaching and task-supported language learning which are described as follows in a recent Ministry of Education curriculum document (2002, p. 16):

Communicative language teaching is teaching that encourages learners to engage in meaningful communication in the target language – communication that has a function over and above that of language learning itself. Any approach that encourages learners to communicate real information for authentic reasons is, therefore, a communicative approach. This includes various types of information gap activities, which require students to seek information that they genuinely need in order to complete some task. Classroom-based language tuition will inevitably be artificial in some respects. However, those who subscribe to the ideals of communicative language teaching aim to keep such artificiality to a minimum and avoid language exercises that are out of context and essentially meaning-free.

Encouraging learners to communicate real information for meaningful purposes is not, in itself, sufficient. What is required of teachers is an understanding, not only of the language itself – its vocabulary, its structure, the relationship between structure and meaning, and its discourse processes – but also an understanding of how best to ensure that this understanding is communicated to learners in ways that assist them to achieve high level proficiency. What this implies is that teachers need to have strategies for:

- improving their own proficiency in te reo Māori;
- analysing Māori language in ways that clarify and extend their own understanding; and
- communicating that understanding to learners in ways that will be effective in increasing their ability to use the language correctly and appropriately in a wide range of contexts.

Appropriate activities, such as, for example, information gap activities, are important. So, too, however, is the provision of a solid linguistic foundation that will optimise the value of these activities and assist in the elimination of errors over time so that students are able to aim for a high level of accuracy as well as fluency.

Pupuke te hihiri, pupuke te mahara, pupuke te wānanga, wānanga nui a Te Kore

Learning other languages has cognitive benefits for learners. It also has the added advantage of providing a context in which learners can reflect upon the social

significance of cultural difference. In doing so, they, and their teachers, will become increasingly aware of the fact that proficiency in using a language in academic contexts is not the same thing as proficiency in using that language for everyday interaction and will be cautious about introducing academic vocabulary into contexts in which it is inappropriate and general vocabulary into academic contexts in which it may not be sufficiently precise.

Teachers are models for the language of their students, and concern has been expressed about the nature of that modelling in some cases. As Reedy (2000) observes, “an impaired language environment in which children develop their language may give rise to forms of language change, some of which may not enhance the language”. It is therefore crucial that teachers not only develop effective teaching strategies, but also develop effective strategies for improving their own proficiency since their own level of proficiency plays an important part in the proficiency development of their students.

Participant assessment and programme evaluation

Both formative and summative assessment play an important role in *Te Whakapiki i te Reo* programmes.

A pre-programme entry te reo Māori proficiency test plays a dual role in assessment. It not only provides a point of comparison with which performance on a post-programme proficiency test can be compared; it also provides diagnostic information relating to the four skills of *pānui* (reading), *tuhituhi* (writing), *whakarongo* (listening) and *kōrero* (speaking).

Lesson plans, lesson materials and lesson delivery are assessed by tutors and participants during and at the end of each teaching practice session. The participants are also required to assess their own performance. They are also given immediate oral feedback and receive written comments from the facilitator. There is also a range of other assessment activities, including activities that involve research-based presentations. At the end of the programme, participants are asked to complete a programme evaluation questionnaire designed in collaboration with a member of the Human Research Ethics Committee of *Te Pua Wānanga ki te Ao*.

As part of the development of the course, the introduction of a post-course evaluation is proposed. This will involve inviting participants to review the effectiveness of the programme between three and six months after they have returned to their classrooms. This will be introduced in 2006.

A vital aspect of the programme is proficiency development in te reo Māori. May and Hall (2003, p. 22) note that teachers in bilingual or immersion settings “must be fluent speakers, readers and writers in both languages” (the target language and the first language of the learners), adding that “[if] teachers are not fluent they will not be able to teach students the academic proficiencies required for long term academic success”. Thus, if teaching te reo Māori and teaching through the medium of te reo Māori are to be effective, teachers should have a high level of proficiency in all four skills: *pānui* (reading), *tuhituhi* (writing), *whakarongo* (listening) and *kōrero* (speaking). The reality is, however, that many current teachers have an overall level of proficiency that is somewhere in the intermediate range and/or have an unbalanced

skills profile, with lower levels of proficiency in some skill areas than in others. Our experience of *Te Whakapiki Reo* and *Te Whakapiki i te Reo* programmes has been that participants' proficiency improves not only as a result of direct teaching of the language in these programmes, but also as a result of immersion in the language throughout the programme and of familiarising themselves with strategies for teaching te reo Māori and for correcting errors. All of this sensitises them to aspects of their own language.

Simply assuming, on the basis of tutor observation, that the proficiency of participants improve during these programmes is not enough. In order to determine the extent to which there is proficiency development (overall and in the four skill areas), programme participants are given a proficiency test at the beginning and end of the programme. The proficiency tests used were developed before the initial *Te Whakapiki Reo* programme was run. Initially, three different tests were designed and trialled. Of these, two were found to be appropriate and these two tests have been used consistently since then. Entry and exit scores over the last seven years were collated to create a large data set (N = 136) and entry and exit scores were compared using a one-tailed t-test to determine whether the overall scores increased significantly. The mean increase in score for participants is 10.39, indicating a significant improvement overall between entry and exit scores (see *Figure 1*, $p < 0.001$).² The entry and exit scores for each skill area were also compared using a paired t-test.³ The most significant proficiency gains occurred in *kōrero* (an increase of 3.945, see *Figure 2*, $p < 0.001$), closely followed by *tuhituhi* (an increase of 3.386, see *Figure 2*, $p < 0.001$). Gains in *pānui* (an increase of 1.603, see *Figure 2*, $p < 0.001$), and *whakarongo* (an increase of 1.404, see *Figure 2*, $p < 0.001$) were highly significant but not as great as those gained in *kōrero* and *tuhituhi*.

Figure 1: Overall difference in test scores at programme entry and exit points

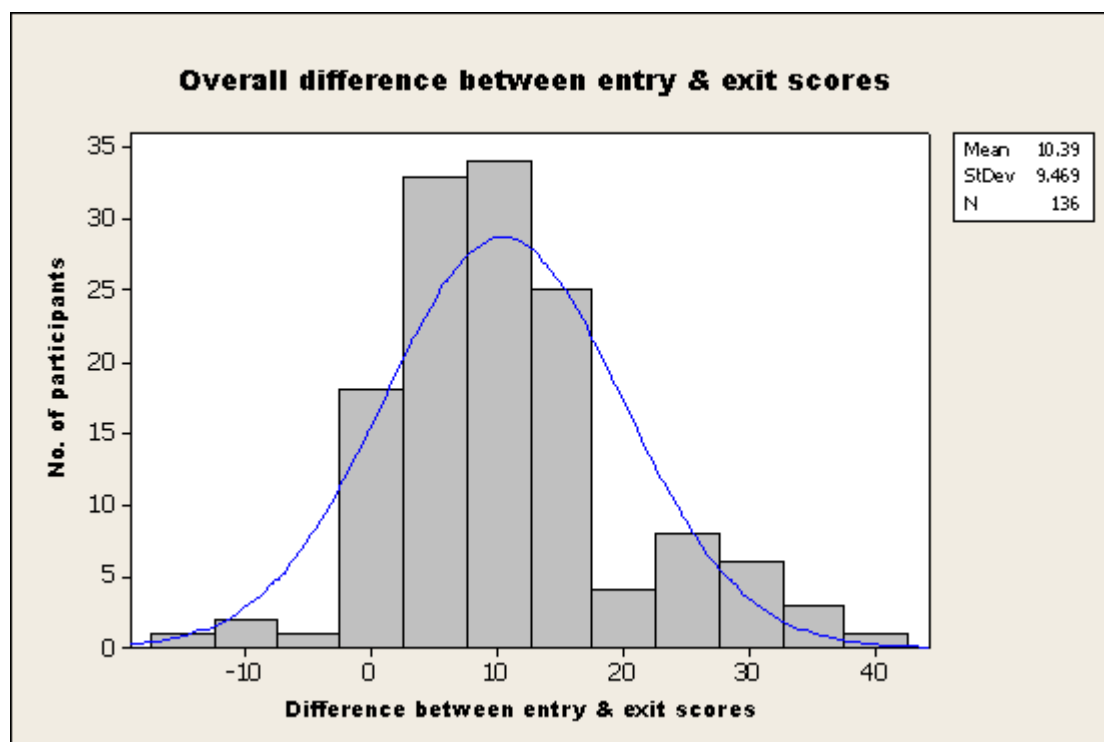
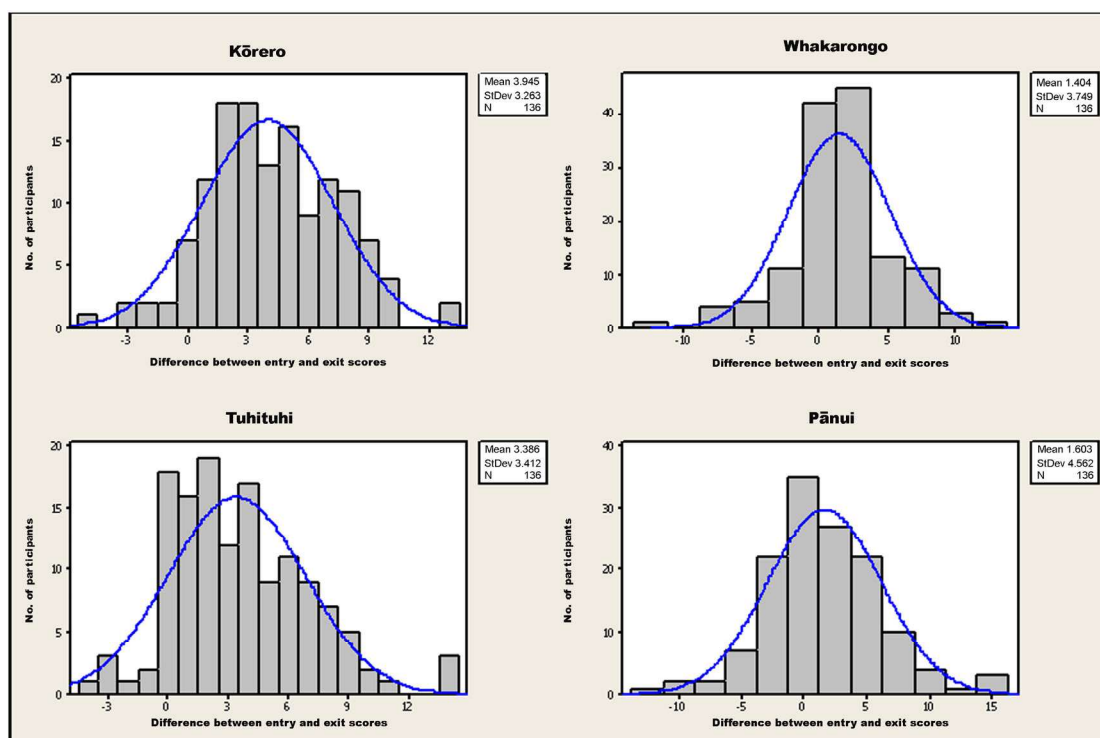


Figure 2: Differences in skill areas (Kōrero, Whakarongo, Tuhituhi and Pānui) at entry and exit points



So far as proficiency descriptors are concerned, an overall four band scale (novice; intermediate, advanced and distinguished) is used and there are band scales for each skill. Within each of the first three skills band scales, there are a further three bands (e.g., intermediate-low, intermediate-mid, intermediate-high; advanced; advanced plus, superior), giving a total of ten bands (see *Appendix 1* for an example in the form of the proficiency descriptors for *pānui* (reading) in English). In the case of *whakarongo* (listening) and *pānui* (reading), percentage scores are assigned, each percentage score being equated with one of the ten band descriptors. In the case of *kōrero* (speaking) and *tuhituhi* (writing), a band is assigned by trained assessors and that band is then equated to a percentage score. An improvement of 10 percentage points overall or in one of the four skills will generally indicate a move across two bands, a move, for example from intermediate-mid to advanced or from intermediate-high to advanced plus.

The Literacy Taskforce Report to the Minister of Education (1999, p. 12) expressed concern about “variability in skills and knowledge about literacy learning”, stressing that “teachers must be well prepared for their challenging jobs through high-quality education that includes a strong focus on developing the skills and knowledge necessary to implement best practice in the teaching of reading and writing” (p. 2). The fact that a recent E.R.O. report (2005) relating to Beginning Year 2 teachers also expresses concern about the area of literacy education indicates that this is a continuing problem. The fact that the greatest proficiency gains of *Te Whakapiki i te Reo* participants have been in the productive skills (i.e., *kōrero* and *tuhituhi*) rather than the receptive skills (i.e., *pānui* and *whakarongo*) indicates the need to refocus the

programme in the future, concentrating more specifically not only on the teaching of literacy skills, but also on improving participant literacy in te reo Māori.

Data for the first four years of operation of the programme are discussed by Johnson and Rolleston (2001). Among their findings are the fact that participants who claimed to be first language speakers of te reo Māori made significantly less improvement overall (some actually appearing to regress) than did second language learners. This was true not only in the case of *kōrero* (speaking) and *whakarongo* (listening), but also in the case of *pānui* (reading) and *tuhituhi* (writing). As Johnson and Rolleston (p. 29) observe, “these scores . . . raise questions about the nature of the proficiency testing instruments themselves. Establishing, and maintaining, test instruments whose validity and reliability can be guaranteed is a complex business requiring significant investment”. In view of this, it would be interesting in future to have participants sit the Level Finder proficiency test developed by the *Taura Whiri* (2005) as well as the proficiency test developed by University of Waikato staff. This combined with participant and trainer perceptions of whether, and to what extent, each student had improved in each skill area, would provide useful insight into the validity of the tests.

Conclusion

Ideally, language revitalisation should take place in the context of a supportive community of speakers of that language. However, transmission of the language has been disrupted in many former te reo Māori-speaking communities and, furthermore, the domains in which the language is used naturally have shrunk (Te Puni Kokiri, 2004). One of the main domains where te reo Māori is accepted is the classroom (in immersion and bilingual contexts) and, in some cases, the wider school community. We therefore believe that schools which provide supportive contexts for the learning of te reo Māori, and, in doing so, make a significant contribution to the Māori language revitalisation agenda, should themselves be supported, not only by their local communities, but by all educationalists who can provide assistance. One way in which we can provide assistance is by continuing, by whatever means, to offer *Te Whakapiki i te reo Māori* programmes and by being reflective and critical of our own practice in order to improve.

Endnotes

1. The language teaching component is contextualised and is task-supported and participants are encouraged to make links across curriculum areas, planning holistic programmes using *Ngā Marautanga Reo Māori*.
2. This score is out of a possible total of 100.
3. This score is out of a possible total of 25.

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Appendix 1: Sample Proficiency Descriptors

Pānui (Reading)

Novice Low	Novice-Mid	Novice-High
Able to identify isolated words and/or major phrases.	Can identify an increasing number of highly contextualised words and/or phrases. Material understood rarely exceeds a single phrase and rereading may be required.	Sufficient control of the writing system to interpret written language in areas of practical need. Can read for instructional and directional purposes. May be able to derive meaning from material at a higher level.
Intermediate-Low	Intermediate-Mid	Intermediate-High
Able to understand main ideas and/or some facts linguistically noncomplex texts. Some misunderstandings will occur.	Able to read consistently with increased understanding simple, connected texts dealing with a variety of basic and social needs.	Able to read consistently with full understanding simple connected texts. Structural complexity may interfere with comprehension. May have to read material several times for understanding.
Advanced	Advanced Plus	Superior
Able to read longer prose and get main ideas and facts but misses some detail. Comprehension gained from situational and subject matter knowledge as well as increasing control of text.	Able to comprehend abstract and linguistically complex parts of text. Also able to comprehend the facts to make appropriate inferences. Comprehension of a wider range of texts but misunderstandings may occur.	Able to read with almost complete comprehension and at normal speed expository prose on unfamiliar subjects and a variety of literary texts. Occasional misunderstandings may occur. Rereading is rarely necessary and misreading is rare.