

Ka whānau mai te reo

Honouring Whānau Upholding Reo Māori

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Ka Whānau Mai te Reo is about supporting whānau reo Māori language development in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The main aims of the project are:

- to deepen our understanding of how to support reo development as whānau move within the education sector and beyond.
- to provide whānau with useful information to help them make decisions during these key education transitions.

Ka Whānau Mai te Reo focuses on the experiences of whānau who are participating in Māori-language education today, and explores the possibilities for reo revitalisation tomorrow. We are particularly interested in how whānau reo Māori development is being supported during transitions because they can be important times for creating or maintaining a stable language foundation. Transitions are often “trigger points”—they are the times when whānau have the opportunity to assess whether they are on the right learning pathway to fulfil their aspirations for reo Māori.

OUR RESEARCH APPROACH

Our approach is about whānau and whanaungatanga. Whanaungatanga creates accountability to the diverse whānau communities whose voices have framed the overarching research question of this report.

Whānau aspirations for the reo are as diverse as whānau themselves, and our approach acknowledges this diversity. We choose to use kōrero ā-whānau with groups of ākonga, whānau, and kaiako to identify

commonalities and differences in their beliefs about reo Māori, their role in reo Māori revitalisation, and the role of the education system.

MĀORI-LANGUAGE EDUCATION

Intergenerational transmission of reo Māori is no longer commonly occurring in Māori homes. While we strive to recreate the conditions that will support a return to Māori being the first language in the home we also ask what role the education system has and how reo Māori learning should look in the 21st century.

Benefits of being bilingual

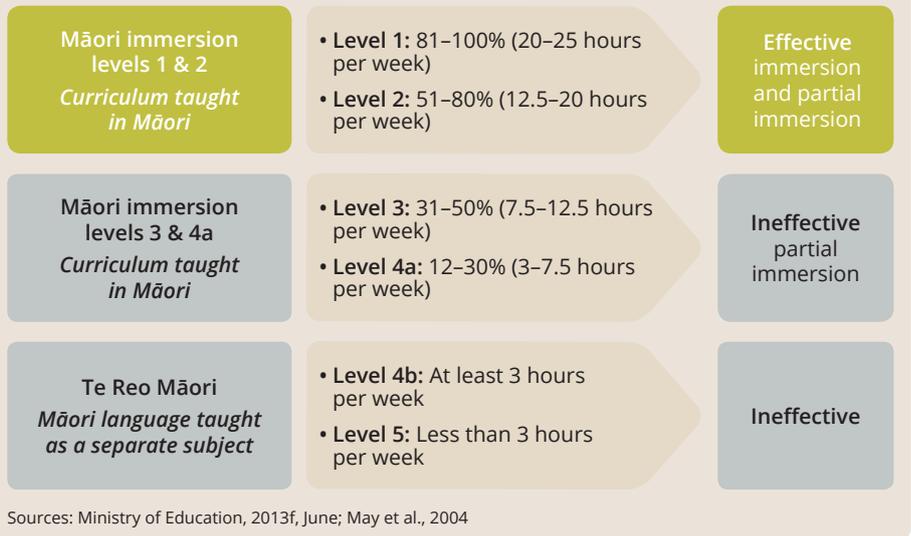
Learning more than one language is associated with many social, cognitive, linguistic, economic, and personal benefits. Being able to speak Māori also brings with it important cultural benefits. Research shows to become fully bilingual and get the most advantage of being bilingual, learners need to begin early and stay in quality Māori-immersion settings for 6 to 8 years.

Within the current education system there are several different Māori-language education options for whānau to consider.

Māori-medium entities provide an environment where tamariki are immersed in reo Māori. The overarching goal of Māori medium is that literacy in reo Māori and in expressing a Māori world view frames the learning of all other literacies, including English.

Whānau also have the choice of participating in high- or low-immersion Māori language programmes in English-medium schools. Full or high-immersion programmes are the most effective options for whānau who have high aspirations for developing their reo Māori through the education system.

EFFECTIVENESS OF IMMERSION/BILINGUAL PROGRAMMES



Transitions and decisions

Whānau who choose to participate in Māori-language education have to make a series of decisions about where and how they will continue to learn reo Māori. These times of transition can be viewed as opportunities for whānau to regularly review and reassess important educational and reo Māori goals.

Three key educational transitions where decisions about reo Māori learning are made are:

1. from early childhood education to primary school
2. from primary to secondary school
3. from secondary school to tertiary, work or other.

This is when whānau need access to accurate and useful information. Generally, word-of-mouth and information from the school itself are the most influential sources of information for whānau. There are critical questions about reo Māori development that whānau can consider to make the decision-making process easier through talking with each other and with the schools they are considering attending.

Factors that support successful transitions include valuing learners' existing knowledge and abilities and supporting learning continuity. Some other key practices and ideas that support the continuity of whānau reo Māori development during educational transitions are:

- having clear long-term whānau reo Māori aspirations
- knowing your Māori-language education options
- learning reo Māori as a whānau

- making or influencing decisions about reo Māori learning at home and at kura/school
- having clear expectations that the kura/school you participate in will:
 - involve whānau in planning for transitions
 - value, promote, and use reo Māori
 - employ kaiako with high reo Māori proficiency and understanding of second-language acquisition
 - value learners' cultural knowledge and language abilities
 - foster relationships between kura/schools to support learning continuity and share information and practices.

WHERE TO NEXT WITH THIS PROJECT?

We have published our first report from the project, which is available on our website.

<http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/ka-whanau-mai-te-reo-honouring-whanau-upholding-reo-maori>

In Year 2, we will report on the kōrero with whānau who are in the preparation stage of a transition. In Year 3, we plan to kōrero again with whānau who have completed their transition about how well they are adapting and how well their reo aspirations are being supported.