



## **Taku Reo helps schools understand where students use te reo Māori**

Taku Reo was developed in response to increasing use of te reo Māori in English-medium schools. The tool helps schools understand where students in Years 4–8 use te reo Māori and the students’ perceptions of the language. Data from the tool helps start conversations with students, whānau, and your community about their aspirations for te reo Māori.

One of the Education Review Office’s outcome indicators is that students are confident in their identity, language, and culture as citizens of Aotearoa New Zealand.<sup>1</sup>

Schools that use Taku Reo will be able to set and track progress towards goals for learning te reo Māori.

### **Positive effects on Māori students’ wellbeing**

Learning te reo Māori can have positive effects on Māori students’ wellbeing. Bright and Wylie note that incorporating te reo Māori and tikanga Māori into school life provides an indication of how schools view and prioritise the links between identity, language, and culture as parts of their students’ wellbeing.<sup>2</sup>

### **Being bilingual is associated with higher achievement**

Learning another language can have benefits for the mind. Research from the Ministry of Education highlighted that those learning a second language achieved higher than their monolingual peers in verbal and non-verbal assessments.<sup>3</sup> Research also shows that bilingual and multilingual learners are better at linguistic abstraction (making meaning from language), decision-making and cognitive flexibility – a combination of divergent thinking (a proxy for creativity) and convergent thinking (reorganising factors to solve problems).<sup>4</sup>

## **Taku Reo is for Years 4–8**

Years 4–8 are pivotal for students learning te reo Māori. The learning languages achievement objectives for these years prioritise students understanding and use of familiar expressions and everyday vocabulary. This understanding helps students to describe aspects of their own background and enables students to construct simple text using their knowledge of te reo Māori.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Education Review Office. (2016). *School evaluation indicators: Effective practice for improvement and learners success*. Wellington: Author, p. 11. Retrieved from <http://www.ero.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/ERO-15968-School-Evaluation-Indicators-2016-v10lowres.pdf>

<sup>2</sup> Bright, N., & Wylie, C. (2017), *Ākonga Māori in English-medium primary and intermediate schools: Findings from the NZCER national survey of primary and intermediate schools 2016*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, p. 20. Retrieved from [http://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/National%20Survey\\_A%CC%84konga%20Ma%CC%84ori.pdf](http://www.nzcer.org.nz/system/files/National%20Survey_A%CC%84konga%20Ma%CC%84ori.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Patrick, A. (2017). The benefits of learning te reo Māori, *School News*. Retrieved from <https://www.schoolnews.co.nz/2017/05/the-benefits-of-learning-te-reo-maori/>

<sup>4</sup> Blundell, S., *How learning new languages boosts your brain and keeps it young, Noted*, Retrieved from <https://www.noted.co.nz/currently/social-issues/how-learning-new-languages-boosts-your-brain-keeps-it-young/>

<sup>5</sup> Ministry of Education. *Learning languages achievement objectives*. Te Kete Ipurangi, Retrieved from <http://nzcurriculum.tki.org.nz/The-New-Zealand-Curriculum/Learning-languages/Achievement-objectives>

## **The survey uses four language domains**

The survey focuses on different language domains: the classroom, the school, the home, and the community. The reason for organising questions into domains was sourced from national and international research literature, including NZCER's: *Te Ahu o te Reo: Te reo Māori in homes and communities*.<sup>6</sup> The *Te Ahu o te Reo* report noted that whānau identified a range of people, places, and contexts in their communities where the use of te reo Māori was normal, expected, or even compulsory. The researchers referred to these as 'te reo Māori domains'. Taku Reo uses four of the place domains.

## **The item development team had diverse expertise**

The item development team consisted of a psychometrician, a te reo expert, a resource development expert, and a project leader. All questions invite responses on a four point scale: *never*, *sometimes*, *often* to *always*. A Likert scale is used to represent people's attitudes to a topic. Each question was carefully reviewed by researchers outside the development team to ensure their validity.

## **We trialled Taku Reo nationally to develop national norms**

In August 2016 we carried out a national trial through a sample of convenience, involving 1793 students in English-medium schools. The data was reasonably representative according to ethnic group, gender, year level, and school decile. The questions in the tool were subjected to psychometric analysis to ensure that they were performing reliably and providing meaningful information. The data from the trial established the national norms for Years 4–8.

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<sup>6</sup> Hutchings, J., et al. (2017). *Te ahū o te reo Māori: Te reo Māori in homes and communities overview report. Ngā kitenga matua—Key findings. Who is using te reo Māori and who are they using it with?*. Wellington: New Zealand Council for Educational Research, p. xvi.