‘Mainstreaming’ Te Reo Māori: Beyond Indifference and Tokenism in the Classroom

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines why Māori language needs to be taught accurately at the early stages of initial teacher education programmes and continue for the duration of a teacher education student’s degree.

If teacher education faculties are permitting their students to mispronounce Māori names or words, they are in fact doing a disservice, not only to the Māori language, but also to the students destined to teach in English medium schools and the children who attend these schools.

This paper defines some of the challenges and questions in regards to the inadequate fostering of the Māori language in many initial teacher education programmes and what needs to be done to rectify this situation. This paper also covers the state of the Māori language, attitudes towards it and strategies for teachers to use in a mainstream teaching setting.

Practice Paper

Keywords: *Initial Teacher Education, language conservation, Māori language*

INTRODUCTION

Beyond Tokenism and Indifference

Māori is an official language of New Zealand and has value not only as a cultural treasure but as a powerful tool to further educational development.[1] Researchers have, for some time now, asserted that learners who are bilingual or multilingual have a powerful cognitive as well as cultural advantage (Garcia, 2008).[2]

According to *Te Aho Arataki Marau* (Ministry of Education, 2009a) the rewards for Māori language learners include the enhancement of multiple facets of their social and cultural lives.

> Research shows that the opportunity to learn an additional language has many cultural, social, cognitive, linguistic, economic, and personal benefits for students. While these benefits apply to all language learning, there are some specific advantages for New Zealand students in learning te reo Māori (p.13).

Beyond this curriculum-based affirmation of improved learning is a more immediate challenge to capture and transform the underlying understandings that educators have when they consider the utility and necessity of the language to themselves, their students, and society. This has been a continuing issue for those who have led the revitalisation of te reo Māori. Indeed, despite progress made in the last thirty years to save the language from total eradication, proponents of te reo Māori have struggled to transform mainstream attitudes beyond the negative and tokenistic perspectives that are well entrenched in the New Zealand public consciousness.

Of note is the way in which power differentials between Pākehā and Māori have contributed to this tokenism. Nevertheless, as Jim Cummins (2004) reminds us, what matters most is the ‘interpersonal relationship’ between teacher and student.

> What educators bring into the classroom reflects their awareness of and orientation to issues of equity and power in the wider society, their understanding of language and how it develops in academic contexts among bilingual children and their commitment to educate the whole child rather than just teach the curriculum. To educate the whole child in a culturally and linguistically diverse context it is necessary to nurture intellect and identity equally in ways that, of necessity, challenge coercive relations of power (pp. 5-6).

In the 1970s, members of Ngā Tamatoa agitated and campaigned for change, and by 1989 the Waitangi Tribunal Claim lodged by Ngā Kaiwhakapūmau i te reo Māori had commenced the proactive recovery

[1] *The Māori language and New Zealand sign language are both official languages of New Zealand*
[2] *The central thesis of Garcia’s book is that ‘bilingual education is the only way’ to educate children in the twenty-first century.*

and resurgence of the language (Harris, 2004).

Since then, groups like Ngā Tamatoa have accentuated a supposed race-based 'privileging' and ignited pro-nationalist discourses urging Māori to leave their past and language behind and become 'one-nation', subsumed within a mono-cultural and mono-lingual 'New Zealand' identity.[3] Tania Ka'ai (2004) has argued that it is these types of attitudes that:

> …have brought the Māori language to the edge of extinction over the past 150 years of Pākehā settlement. The process has been brought about by a culmination of political power and social pressure which has seen significant elements of Māori culture undergo a steady, cumulative deterioration (p. 202).

The threat of language extinction is a very real danger despite the advent of kōhanga reo, kura kaupapa Māori, wharekura, the establishment of Māori broadcasting agencies and the presence of the Māori Language Commission.[4] Painting a positive picture regarding the health of the language, or rather the initiatives in motion that support the growth of the language, has contributed to a sense of apathy and indifference within mainstream New Zealand. During the 2012 'Te wiki o te reo Māori/ Māori Language Week' promotions and debates, various commentators expressed surprise at the seriously declining state of the language, while others questioned the validity of the statistics regarding the health of te reo Māori. For those who have paid close attention, the grave concerns expressed by experts in the past year were voiced as early as 2006 in findings from a report 'Te Oranga o te Reo Māori' which found that:

> Despite the improvements in the health of the Māori language in recent times, and the apparent success of current revitalisation initiatives, the Māori language is still a language at risk … it is spoken almost exclusively by Māori people, and, in total only 4% of New Zealanders can speak the language (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2008, p. iv).

In the Te Reo Mauriora document released in 2011 it stated that:

> The Minister of Māori Affairs established an Independent Panel on the 15 July 2010 to inquire into the state of the Māori Language, given the view that a sum of at least $225 million was currently being spent on the language. Yet the recent Waitangi Tribunal prepublication of Wai 262 showed a decline in the level of 'Māori te reo speakers (Te Puni Kōkiri, 2011, p. 5).

Therefore more time and planning needs to be invested in the revitalisation of te reo Māori if it is to survive, and greater appreciation for the reality of its place within mainstream society is vital for those who are tasked with its dissemination to New Zealand students. The unrealistic assumptions and misunderstandings regarding the plight of te reo Māori have been highlighted by Bauer (2008) who observed that:

> The statistics [do] not support [the] optimistic view of the state of te reo Māori. The figures from the national surveys and the censuses do not present the same picture and that must cast doubt on the reliability of the data we have. I believe from the figures available that the language is still struggling and there are disturbing signs that it continues losing ground, rather than gaining it (p. 34).

Ensuring that educators and the general public, which includes Māori, understand the still-endangered predicament of te reo Māori is an important step, but recognising this issue and taking responsibility for it requires a significant shift beyond tokenistic approaches. This of course also refers to political figures, who play an active and critical part in terms of at least being accurately informed about the present status of the Māori language.

On a recently televised panel discussion Marae Investigates and Waka Huia (Melbourne & Rasch, 2012) Don Brash, the former leader of the National Party, signalled indifference to the language arguing that the future security of te reo Māori is not a national issue but simply a Māori one.

Leaving the fight to Māori alone is not only an unethical and insensitive position to take, but it lacks the foresight and understanding of just how central te reo Māori is, and will be, to the development of New Zealand identity and the social and cultural well-being of the country in the future. Brash's myopic and xenophobic views are hardly surprising given his negative stance on issues Māori. Nevertheless, if teachers similarly lack genuine interest, are equally apathetic or ill-informed, then the consequences for generations of learners will be potentially catastrophic. There is simply no room for complacency in the current climate, particularly in light of the real and present danger that minority languages face in the coming years. Of this looming peril Cantoni (2007) has warned that:

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[3] *Māori 'privilege' has become an increasingly topical research issue following National Party Leader, Don Brash's infamous Orewa speech in 2004. For further reading see Meihana, P. (2010). The idea of Māori privilege. Te Pouhere Kōreo IV: Māori History Māori People (pp. 41-50). Wellington, New Zealand.*

[4] *The Māori Language Commission was established under the Māori Language Act 1987 to foster the use of the Māori language. It affirms te reo Māori as an official language of New Zealand which has jurisdiction in commissions of inquiry, courts of law, and tribunals.*

> About 90% of the world's languages may be extinct in the next century, to be supplanted by those, such as English, Spanish, or Chinese that have been more widely taught and used. The danger of language extinction and of the loss of linguistic diversity parallels and exceeds the severity of the decline of plant and animal diversity on our earth (p. vii).

Educators for the future, who will be teaching in mainstream schools, must understand that their personal commitment to provide opportunities to speak and hear the Māori language may be the only connection many students have with te reo Māori.

Beyond the reliance on the goodwill of a few individual teachers there are key underlying policies and documents that urge all educators to think carefully about how they will cater for Māori language learning in their schools.

The *Ka Hikitia* strategy (MOE, 2009b), for instance, has proposed that students should be able to:

- access the Māori language education options they want
- build mātauranga and knowledge of tikanga Māori
- see the broad value of te reo Māori in society
- develop quality reo Māori through proficiency, accuracy and complexity (p.20).

The Aronga Māori[5] course offered at the University of Waikato (2012) facilitates the learning and teaching of te reo and tikanga Māori in school settings, developing teaching strategies that draw on second language learning and teaching techniques. Before lecturers commence teaching any new Aronga Māori classes for the semester, they ask simple but important prior knowledge questions to their students. These include: "Has anyone had any real exposure while at school to the Māori language?" "Has anyone been part of a kapa haka group, or Māori performing arts?" "Do you know that the Māori language is an official language of New Zealand?".

Lecturers have found from personal teaching experience in Aronga Māori that more than three quarters of the students who participate in the Aronga course are likely to have had little or no tangible exposure to Māori culture before. Subsequently, it is no surprise that many of the student teachers who undertake the Aronga Māori course find it exceptionally challenging. Some appear apprehensive and uncomfortable at the beginning, particularly when they are asked to pronounce Māori names, articulate phrases, and repeat general expressions. Recognising and addressing these initial barriers of ambivalence and mispronunciation are perhaps the first major steps towards the better delivery and teaching of te reo Māori in mainstream classrooms.

The Ambivalence of Mispronunciation

From the author's teaching experience of students who take the Aronga Māori course, most have limited or no knowledge of the Māori world or language, and at the completion of the paper many are still unable to correctly enunciate basic Māori words. Key reasons for this are proposed:

Firstly, the duration of the Aronga Māori course is far too short for new learners of Māori to manage the workload outlined in Footnote 5. The broad aims of this course, its strategies and topics, are simply too expansive for a short half paper. Moreover, developing each student's knowledge base, basic pronunciation skills, their ability to plan units and utilise resources, necessarily requires more sustained attention beyond a short semester course. Additionally, in previous years, Aronga students were challenged to practise what they had learnt in their tutorials and lectures. In their local primary school placement each student was expected to teach a 50 minute lesson containing basic elements of Maori language to a small number of junior school children. The most immediate and problematic issue that emerged in these lessons was the widespread mispronunciation and incorrect modelling of Māori words and phrases. Some of these simple mispronunciations included *'Pay-pay –tooh – ah –new-kew'* instead of Papa-tū-ā-nuku and *'Mow-ray-nah'* in place of mōrena.[6] Mispronunciation of te reo Māori is a widespread issue in New Zealand and is not only a problem for school teachers and lecturers, but also for radio and television presenters whose mispronunciation is regularly heard and 'normalised' as part of the evolving 'Kiwi' dialect. Akonga students have also been guilty of the incorrect spelling of Māori words including missing macrons from words

[5] *'Aronga Māori' –This paper is a compulsory paper for all primary teacher trainee students. The workload for the Aronga Māori course is equivalent to a half paper, with a credit value of 7.5 points. It is expected that students will complete a minimum of 75 hours of study, which includes attending a minimum of 25 hours of scheduled lectures and tutorials to successfully obtain a passing grade. During the course, trainee teachers are introduced to several basic topics relating to Māori cosmology, protocols of the Marae, Māori greetings and directional commands, along with a range of simple Māori songs. In addition, students practice varying skill -based strategies to more effectively 'apply' the language through kōrero (speech), whakarongo (listening), whakaatu (visual), tuhituhi (writing), and waiata (song). To complement their learning, and to add to their teaching kete or 'tool-kit', trainees are also exposed to a range of Māori language resources such as audio files of Māori waiata and phrases, which also comprise a number of verbal activities to aid the students' progress in terms of their diction, phraseology, and general knowledge of Māori culture. Trainees are also instructed on how to set out lesson plans that align with the Māori language curriculum document Te Aho Arataki Marau mō te Ako i Te Reo Māori, (Ministry of Education, 2009). Aronga Māori aims to provide teaching strategies for second language learners, encouraging trainees to adopt better practice and theory when 'integrating te reo Māori into their class programmes' (University of Waikato, 2012, p. 3).*

[6] *'Papa-tū-ā-nuku' is the name given in Māori for the 'earth mother', while 'mōrena' means 'good morning'.*

on charts, songs, and other work displayed on classroom walls.

Providing sensitive leadership and 'buddy systems' for both trainee teachers and experienced teachers is perhaps one internal way to deal with these issues. Building a stronger classroom community, particularly when te reo Māori is involved, should embrace the idea of whakatika or 'correction'. The notion of simple correction is espoused in the Māori phrase 'mā te whakatika o te hē, ka tika te whakahua (through the correction of a mistake, comes the correct pronunciation)'. In finding ways to help teachers with the pronunciation of foreign words Ur (1991) offers a range of suggestions that includes:

- the imitation of teacher or recorded model of sounds, words and sentences
- the recording of learner speech, contrasted with native model
- systematic explanation and instruction (including details of the structure and movement of parts of the mouth)
- imitation drills: repetition of sounds, words and sentences
- choral repetition of drills
- varied repetition of drills (varied speed, volume, mood)
- learning and performing dialogues (as with drills, using choral work, and varied speed, volume, mood)
- learning by heart of sentences, rhymes, jingles (p. 54).

These are only a few of the possible activities that can improve current language learning and pronunciation. However, teachers need to be confident and competent in what they are modelling, preferably beforehand, but when necessary should be constantly re-assessing, correcting and paying attention to their own performance.

Correct pronunciation is just the starting point. There are deeper issues to consider regarding language acquisition and pedagogy. For example, Hill (2010) highlights the need for primary teachers who teach te reo Māori to know the intricacies of second language teaching. Hill explains:

> Moreover, an even greater challenge in relation to teaching a second language lies in the ability to speak the target language (content knowledge). Given the largely monolingual English nature of the teaching force, this challenge would appear particularly daunting. As such the pedagogical and content knowledge required in second language teaching must form an integral element of any course designed to up skill generalist teachers who are not yet fluent speakers of the target language (p. 37).

Not only will teachers need to familiarise themselves with a new language they will also need to develop their confidence to impart that knowledge to students.

As one can see this is not a quick fix, cannot be achieved and delivered in a state of ambivalence, and certainly not in a limited timeframe. In this regard, in retrospect, it can be questioned whether the Aronga Māori course goals are in fact attainable. While the course intends to progressively build skills, correct enunciation, provide strategies and foster the desire to teach te reo Māori, its short length means that trainees do not have the time needed to gain the proposed competencies and consequently struggle to 'stay afloat', let alone assist in the language development of others. This is simply an unrealistic time frame to adequately learn even the most basic levels of language diction, intonation, and pronunciation. Learning components of a new language is a long and difficult process. To learn a new language, or at least become familiar with a new language, one needs to attempt to take on the culture wholeheartedly. This is affirmed by Brown (2007) who asserts that:

> Learning a second language is a long and complex undertaking. Your whole person is affected as you struggle to reach beyond the confines of your first language and into a new language, a new culture, a new way of thinking, feeling, and acting. Total commitment, total involvement, a total physical, intellectual and emotional response is necessary to successfully send and receive messages in a second language (p. 1).

Because the Aronga Māori course is only offered in the first year of initial teacher education, students are often unable to retain, or develop, the information they are taught over three years. This severely limited time allocated to specific training in Māori language delivery reinforces the view that te reo Māori is unimportant in mainstream classrooms.

In some respects the course may in fact be doing more harm than good by reinforcing a condensed paper that tinkers around the superficial edges. If these attitudes are to change, and the indifference, ambivalence and tokenism dissolved, then courses like Aronga Māori must be provided for the duration of the trainee's degree. This would enable closer attention to be paid to the building blocks required to establish a stronger foundation in the level of Māori language competency among the teacher trainees.

The embarrassment and discomfort students feel when teachers mispronounce their names in front of their peers has long-term effects. Some Māori have

deliberately changed their name because teachers have been unable, and in some cases unwilling, to take the time to pronounce them correctly (personal communication, 2012; Bevan-Brown, 1993).

Bishop and Berryman (2006) have reminded educators that Māori is incredibly important to learners and that "pronunciation of names and Māori language in general" [has been long viewed as] "problematic by students at School" (p. 20). The students Bishop and Berryman spoke with were forthright about the ways in which mispronunciation affected their confidence:

> Yeah some teachers call me Mary and I say, that's not my name.
>
> She's been here for some years ... Some of the teachers don't even know how to say our names.
>
> *How does that make you feel?*
>
> Dumb, and I always argue with her. She makes me feel like I've got a dumb name and I'm dumb (pp. 20-21).

Not only is the student given a clear message about his or her intelligence he/she is also positioned as unimportant, irrelevant and unwelcome. This feeds a deficit view of Māori as somehow abnormal. When their names are not accepted or honoured their very identity is erased.

In other research conducted by Savage et al. (2011) some teachers believed that, although difficult, it was important to pronounce Māori students' names correctly.

> Using Māori greetings. Saying "Kia ora" to the kids as they come into the class. For me that has been a very new thing, and I've found it quite challenging because my pronunciation is not great … it's improving and the kids are happy to give me feedback … I think it helps to build that relationship with the kids (Teacher, p. 117).

Pronouncing the student's name correctly enhances the student and teacher relationship. Names often have significant meaning for Māori children and their families. In the author's particular whānau, names are often representative of an important ancestor or tribal event. When these names are mispronounced regularly, with little regard for the cultural meaning attached to them, it is not only demeaning for the person that carries that name but offensive also to the mana (integrity) and cultural significance of their ancestors, and their iwi (tribe).

The author's son, in his first year at a local high school, was ridiculed by other pupils because his name was repeatedly mispronounced by teachers. When he took exception to the in-class teasing, he was punished and given detention by staff. His classmates were also given detentions because they laughed at their teachers' mispronunciation. Why were the students disciplined when it was the teachers who created the problem in the first place? Educators, who hold positions of power in the classroom, need to take responsibility for their actions, find the strength to admit when they have made mistakes and model transformation to their students. Rather than punishing their students, these teachers need to look more closely at themselves. Taking ownership of one's own learning and professional development is crucial. Far too many mainstream teachers look for shortcuts when it comes to using te reo Māori in the classroom. Making the effort to get names right is vital to building confidence and a sense of belonging for students. When the dominant language and culture is so pervasive in mainstream schools, educators must be open to creating space to allow other cultures and languages to flourish. However, this requires an improved skill set, for some a change of heart, a broader vision for the future and a desire to see it mature.

The mispronunciation of names is all too common, almost epidemic to the point that even the most basic recurring Māori words are said incorrectly in mainstream New Zealand society. Indeed, one of the most mispronounced words in New Zealand is 'Māori', often pronounced 'Mow –ree' by a large number of people.

As mentioned earlier, according to the research produced within the Te Kotahitanga project, Māori students are more likely to positively respond to teachers who try to say their names properly, rather than those who read their names out with no regard for correct pronunciation.

In 2013, with modern technology and a major push to revitalise the Māori language, there is no excuse for teachers who refuse to work on correct pronunciation. Prolonged and more intensive preparation within tertiary institutions can significantly improve the pronunciation and delivery of te reo Māori in mainstream classrooms.

'Mainstreaming' te Reo Māori

How can educators nurture a language that essentially holds second-class citizenship in its own country? If Māori language preparation for initial teacher educators can be effectively taught with an increase of intensive class instruction, then it will be vital to reflect that value within the mainstream syllabus. Thus, for te reo Māori to be truly appreciated

by teachers and students alike, it must be elevated above its current station in wider society: shifted beyond a state of indifference and tokenism. Some have debated for years that the status should be recognised by making it a compulsory part of New Zealand mainstream schooling. However, until this day arrives, there are a number of different resources that have been devised to help aid the learner and teacher of te reo Māori in many New Zealand schools.

Grounding students within a well-devised, fun and creative language programme is essential to improving te reo Māori in mainstream schools. Integrating te reo with other curriculum subjects is an effective first step beyond tokenistic approaches. This can naturally occur when Māori stories, legends, poems, waiata (songs), and games are regularly used to teach other aspects of the curriculum from science to maths, physical education, reading and writing. Using various resources such as harakeke (flax), shells from the sea, or the coloured rods used in the teaching of Ataarangi[7], is a great way to draw on materials that have long been employed in the teaching of te reo Māori. Offering the Māori language equivalents to these various materials works to build on already established English words, and normalises them as part of everyday vocabulary and not relics from a bygone era. Another useful strategy is to include the use of basic Māori phrases when giving instructions during daily classroom activities. The following, for instance, can be used regularly:

Whakarongo mai tamariki mā	*Listen children*
Tikina atu ā koutou pukapuka	*Get your books*
Hoihoi	*Quiet*
Kia kaha tamariki mā[8]	*Work hard children*

The language taught in the classroom needs to be meaningful and applicable and not just a token gesture. Meaningful repetition, rather than a tokenistic one-off celebration, is crucial to normalising and 'mainstreaming' te reo Māori. Research has shown that 'children learn best when they see a real point in what they are saying and doing.' Thus, teachers should necessarily 'communicate real information for authentic reasons' (MOE, 1990, p. 18). Mainstreaming te reo Māori, then, is about building the language into the everyday practical experiences of learners and not restricting it to a specified time-slot between other activities. When children acquire a second language they do more than simply listen: they evaluate and eventually build confidence to express those words in their day to day vocabulary. Brown (2007) points out it is important to understand how human beings feel, respond, believe and value when they encounter a new language. This, he writes, is an exceedingly 'important aspect of [the] theory of second language acquisition' (p. 154). In this regard, teachers need to encourage second language modelling for their students in mainstream schools and should practise the basic fundamentals of Māori vowels and consonants with students every day until they can move to simple words, phrases and greetings. This pedagogical approach is emphasised in the *Tihē Mauri Ora* syllabus (MOE, 1990):

> Caring teachers can help children to reach more accurate expression and clearer understanding through explanation and practice, and through giving learners time to listen, to understand, to speak. Praise and encouragement to speak, in spite of initial errors, are most important (p. 19).

To encourage correct modelling, teachers can employ popular word charts and waiata (songs) that offer highly useful fundamental exercises. These basic exercises are made up of ngā pū o te reo Māori (the letters of the Māori alphabet), ngā oropuare (the vowels), and ngā orokati (consonants).[9] Once teachers know how to pronounce these basic sounds themselves, they are free to create games and fun exercises that suit their students' levels and abilities.

Continual repetition of these songs works as simple building blocks and should be understood that way. In a sense they are 'warm up' exercises that precede the building of vocabulary by enabling learners to familiarise themselves with the sounds that are central to recognising new words when they see them. In addition, teachers can, and should, support their students to attain accurate expressions and clearer understanding through effective modelling.

Teachers, therefore, need to keep learning and upskilling their proficiency in the Māori language and adding new words and sentences to demonstrate the use of these basic vowel sounds when their pupils encounter new kupu (words). Two of the more effective ways of mainstreaming te reo Māori are to enable and encourage students to communicate with each other in their everyday classroom environment. Teachers can begin by creating an atmosphere where new words, feelings, pleasantries, commands, agreements or even disagreements are introduced

[7] *Te Ataarangi was developed in the late 1970's by well-known Māori language guardians Dr Kāterina Te Heikōkō Mataira and Ngoingoi Pewhairangi. Te Ataarangi was adapted from the model of The Silent Way which was first developed by Caleb Gattegno, which utilises cuisenaire rods (rākau) and spoken language.*

[8] *Depending on the year level of the class and knowledge of the students, the teacher can simplify or increase the difficulty of sentence structures, commands and other formalities.*

[9] *There are five vowel sounds in Māori; they can be pronouced long or short. A, E, I, O, U. Māori vowels sound much like those in Sāmoa, France, Rarotonga and Spain. There are ten consonant sounds in the Māori language (p,t,k,m,n,ng,wh,r,h,w).*

and modelled. These phrases and words cannot hang on walls waiting to be read, but should be uttered repeatedly by teachers, rewarded when heard and 'normalised' as part of the students' common classroom vocabulary. In order for students to feel comfortable speaking Māori in the classroom, they must hear and see it being used by their teachers.

Building plans and strategies to 'mainstream' te reo Māori is not a difficult process. In recent years, researchers have gathered some outstanding online resources that have been specifically devised for the basic instruction of te reo Māori in mainstream classrooms. These materials and teaching ideas are available for all. Utilising this growing armoury of resources in Māori language learning is an important part of professional development. Teachers should pay particular attention to some of the new websites that offer access to innovative programmes and resources. The Māori Language Commission (MLC) along with Te Kete Ipurangi (TKI) have also, over the years, produced some excellent resources relevant to beginners, intermediate, and advanced learners and teachers of te reo Māori. Searching through the available mass of current resources, teachers will find a variety of recordings formulated to model the rehearsal of vowels, consonants and diphthongs.[10] Advances in technology have provided a rich reservoir of opportunities to the modern learner of te reo Māori. The issue is not about a lack of resources, but rather a lack of desire, motivation and confidence to implement and 'mainstream' these resources, weaving them into the fabric of the common New Zealand classroom experience.

Conclusion: Building Brighter Futures?

'Building Brighter Futures' is a catch phrase in recent New Zealand National Party rhetoric.[11] However, te reo Māori is conspicuously absent in their plans for the future; it is also notably absent from English medium classrooms. A brighter future for New Zealand is one that embraces te reo Māori as a central part of the country's identity and language set. Leaving the health and wellbeing of the language to Māori immersion schools, kōhanga reo, and institutions alone is tantamount to serious cultural neglect. But first, the general public, and educators especially, should be aware of the real and present danger that is threatening the survival of the Māori language: tokenism and indifference. Beyond that initial recognition is the challenge to take ownership and normalise the language as part of the everyday schooling experience. For teachers, this requires better, more intensive, preparation and an on-going in-service support and development.

If we expect certain aspects of the Māori language to be taught within New Zealand mainstream schools, then we need to have adequate courses for our initial teacher education students. This paper contends that initial teacher education students in all institutions preparing teachers should undertake a compulsory and vigorous Māori language course for the entire three or four years of their teaching degree, and not a condensed one semester paper. New Zealand English medium schools and teacher education facilities need to work together not only to contribute to the revitalisation of the Māori language, but also to give students in English medium education opportunities to embrace and take ownership of one of the more precious and unique treasures this country has to offer. In addressing the state of the language as it is currently taught, educators should be more aware of the vital need to correct mispronunciation. Developing an awareness of the cultural meanings and value of the language is important, but there are also a number of strategies and plans that can be put in place to avoid making the same mistakes on a continuing basis. Making use of the growing resources available to teachers is part of this process, yet in all instances the underlying aim to 'normalise' and 'mainstream' te reo as a common part of daily classroom activities should serve as the foundation when developing plans and strategies. A brighter future can be found when teachers make personal decisions to move beyond tokenism and indifference, when they decide to take ownership of their own language learning and delivery. This transformation can be made easier and more comprehensive when courses like Aronga Māori become a central aspect of initial teacher education, rather than a quick introductory course without long term commitment and foresight.

[10] Grouping of two vowel sounds comprising one or two vowels that is the combination of two sounds said one after the other.
[11] See for instance, ' Nationals next actions to build a brighter future.' http://www.national.org.nz/action.asp, accessed 20th September 2012.

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