

In and beyond the classroom

An evaluation of tools for language teaching and learning

Context

Te reo Māori, the indigenous language of Aotearoa New Zealand, has become an endangered language since British colonisation. Slow progress with recent revitalisation initiatives has been attributed, in part, to negative attitudes and monolingual (English-only) mind-sets prevalent across New Zealand society.

This research examines students' perceptions of the effectiveness of tools used in a blended delivery teacher education course which takes students beyond the constraints of traditional lecture-type delivery, both physically and virtually, through the integration of a range of experiential and digitally mediated tools.



Research Questions

1. Which tools helped students increase their personal proficiency in Māori language and culture?
2. Which tools helped increase students' confidence and competence to teach Māori language and culture?
3. Which tools help increase motivation and engagement?
4. Which tools helped address resistance to 'things Māori'?

The Study

- Five-part online survey four weeks after the course.
- Quantitative and qualitative data.
- Response rate 64% (n = 83)

The Tools



LECTURES: One hour, one per week for on-campus students. Videoed for distance students.



WORKSHOPS: Two hours, one per week for on-campus students. Videoed for distance students.



NOHO MARAE: Overnight stay on a marae (traditional Māori gathering place).



FORUMS: For questions and discussion about course content and assignments.



ĀKONA TE REO: Website with study modules to support learning of Māori language and culture.



PĀTAKĀ REO: A repository for plans and resources to support teaching and learning te reo Māori.



LANGUAGE PERFECT: A commercial web-based vocabulary learning programme.



MOODLE: An online learning management system; used as a repository and conduit for other facets of the course (called Learn at UC).

Findings

	Overall Rank	Proficiency		Teaching readiness	
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD
Language Perfect	1	3.62	0.62	3.35	0.66
Noho marae	2	3.32	0.74	3.31	0.63
Ākōna te Reo	3	3.24	0.67	3.21	0.65
Workshops	4	3.16	0.79	3.06	0.79
Learn (Moodle)	5	3.03	0.56	3.00	0.59
Pātākā Reo	6	2.89	0.68	2.89	0.53
Lectures	7	2.83	0.79	2.72	0.71
Forums	8	2.66	0.76	2.54	0.71

Language Perfect and the Noho Marae were perceived by students to be the most helpful tools for increasing their personal competence with Māori language and culture, and also for increasing their confidence and teaching readiness. The ease of use, self-paced nature, immediate feedback, and competitive aspects of Language Perfect increased students' motivation, and its 'addictive' nature resulted in additional engagement. The Noho Marae contributed strongly to attitudinal changes and was strongly influential in addressing many students' resistance to learning te reo Māori.

Impact of the Study

Changes made as a result of this study have further enhanced the learning experiences and outcomes for students in subsequent iterations of the course.

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