

## Ngā Take Aromatawai me ngā Take Tātari i ngā Hua ka Puta – Issues Concerning the Assessments and their Interpretation 2

### Issues

For the first time in 2005, the majority of the work required for national monitoring in Māori medium schools was undertaken by He Kupenga Hao i te Reo, a group based in Palmerston North whose sole focus is on Māori medium education. The issues discussed in this chapter have arisen from their work and the insights gained throughout all facets of the monitoring process. The student results presented in subsequent chapters should be considered in conjunction with the issues raised here.

### Perception of NEMP Within the Māori Medium Sector.

In many of the randomly selected schools contacted by He Kupenga Hao i te Reo to be involved in the 2005 assessments, there was a degree of resistance. This was based on the notion that there was little benefit that came back to the schools themselves, and the project was a way for the Ministry of Education to ‘check up’ on the Māori medium sector for political reasons. In part this perception seemed to be based on past experiences with the Project, with some principals questioning the benefit of previous reports which simply compared the achievement of students in Māori medium schools with Māori students in English medium schools. They also expressed concern that there was little or no opportunity for feedback following the assessment period.

In order to address this issue, a decision was made to convene a meeting of the principals of the schools involved to review, discuss and give feedback on the assessment process as well as the student results when the draft report had been completed. In addition to this, a pack containing some of the assessment tasks from 2005 was also distributed to the sample schools at the same time as the



final report was sent out. Copies of this assessment resource are available for purchase by other schools, at a small cost. While this has been available for English medium schools, at a cost to the schools, it is the first time for Māori medium. This will allow schools to use the sample assessment tasks with their own students and compare the results with the national sample.

Establishing meaningful and ongoing relationships with schools will be important to ensure that the full benefits of the NEMP approach to national monitoring are realised and understood.

### Sample Schools

A recurring problem for NEMP Māori medium assessment has been the non-availability of some of the randomly selected schools. When a selected school declines involvement, a replacement school is selected, and this undermines the national representivity of the sample. In 2005, two schools declined involvement, both citing a full calendar

of school events during the assessment period. Establishing meaningful and ongoing relationships with the Māori medium sector may result in fewer schools declining involvement in the future.

### Task Development

A decision at the beginning of 2005, to change the focus of national monitoring in Māori medium schools from a comparison with Māori students in English medium to reporting about what students in Māori medium know and can do, allowed more flexibility in task development. A one-day task development meeting was attended by 18 year 8 Māori medium teachers, and ideas from this meeting resulted in eleven tasks unique to Māori medium. The balance of the tasks were selected from those developed for English medium assessment, some of which were re-contextualised or expressed in different ways (as opposed to the direct translation approach of previous years), that were seen to be more appropriate for Māori medium students. It is hoped that this

approach to task development can be built on in future years in order to ensure that tasks are appropriate and relevant for the intended audience.

The time-frame to develop and adapt tasks for Māori medium was very tight. Because of this it was impossible to find authentic source material for some of the tasks, and where this was the case the material was translated. For a small number of tasks this resulted in linguistic complexity mainly because of the context of the task and the technical vocabulary involved.

### Assessment Results

For the purposes of this report, the results from the 12 schools have been aggregated in order to provide a national snapshot of achievement in Māori medium schools. As with all assessments that report overall scores, the fact that there are exemplary performances by students in some schools is not readily apparent.

In spite of the procedural difficulties discussed above, the assessment results nevertheless highlight a number of trends and issues that have the potential to inform the practice of teachers and schools, as well as the policy directions of the Ministry of Education in terms of providing for teacher professional development and resource development. The following points emerged from a number of the tasks.

### Pūkenga Pārongo

Students performed well on 'comprehension' type items which required students to show that they understood a particular written or oral text. They were less able to evaluate ideas from a text, express and justify opinions, or make connections to a wider range of issues beyond those mentioned in the text material. Many students were also unfamiliar with different types of diagrams which could be used to summarise and record information, and also with identifying signs that could help in evaluating the validity of information.

### Tikanga ā-lwi

Results in Tikanga ā-lwi tasks concerned with economics showed that students had a limited understanding in this area. This may reflect a lack of attention given to economics in the curriculum of the sample schools, as well as the paucity of resource material available in te reo Māori in this area.



### Pāngarau

Students performed well in items requiring the recall of basic number facts. Conceptual understanding of fractions however remains an area of major concern. Poor understanding was shown about the respective roles of the numerator and denominator, operations involving fractions, place value of digits in decimal fractions, the conversion between fractions, decimals and percentages, equivalent fractions, and the application of percentages. Three of the 12 sample schools were known to have been involved in the Te Poutama Tau professional development project in numeracy, and results from these schools in some of the fractions tasks were analysed separately. The results of the Te Poutama Tau schools were considerably better. While there can be no statistical significance attached to these results because of the small number of sample schools, it is nevertheless worth noting as a point for discussion with regard to improving the performance of students in numeracy.

Students performed relatively well in the pāngarau tasks which allowed them to use geometric reasoning to extend a sequential pattern and find a value for a variable relating to the pattern. However almost all students were unable to discover and use the algebraic relationship between the variables in the same sequential pattern in order to find a value for one of the variables. The ability and conceptual understanding to do this is essential for success in pāngarau at higher levels of schooling. This highlights the need for focussed professional development and comprehensive curriculum materials in te reo Māori.



### Te Reo Māori

Although students showed general proficiency and competence in ordinary everyday conversation, there were two distinct groups with regard to academic proficiency. Some students were able to express their ideas, strategies, understandings and opinions clearly with recourse to a wide range of vocabulary. Other students however found it difficult to understand some of the source material and to provide anything more than superficial answers to questions due to their limitations with te reo Māori. In many cases these students used English vocabulary and phrases mixed in with their Māori. Examples included:

'Kore good mo te lungs me te heart.'

'He tino dangerous.'

'Kia feel welcome ngā manuhiri.'

'I hāwhe au i ngā blocks.'

While schools are asked to provide lists of Year 8 students who have had at least four years of Māori immersion education from which the sample is randomly selected, this may need to be emphasised more strongly in the future.

Some of the more widespread grammatical and interlanguage errors included:

Transferring the English expression "I went ..." in response to a question asking students to explain their mathematical thinking: "Ka haere au ..."

Incorrect use of "taea": "Ka taea koe ki te ...", "Kāore au taea ..."

Use of "pea" to start a sentence: "Pea ka haere ia ..."

Incorrect use of "ka" with "kāore" in a negative sentence structure: "Kāore rātou ka pīrangī ..."

Incorrect use of "he" with "kāore" in a negative sentence structure: "Kāore rātou he moko ..."

Although it is recognised that all languages change over time, and it is impossible for te reo Māori to remain unaffected by the dominant presence of English in Aotearoa, individual schools and their communities and/or the Māori medium sector in general may see it as important to discuss which aspects of language change are acceptable to them and which aspects are not acceptable. Strategies could then be developed to limit the unacceptable aspects of language change. The NEMP project has the ability to report on general trends of language change as evidenced within the sample schools.