



## Riariakina ō rongō hirikapo: From kōhanga reo to kura

### TLRI Grant Holder:

Margie Hohepa, with Vanessa Paki and Sally Peters, University of Waikato

**Project start date:** January 2014

**Project finish date:** January 2016

### Project Description

This was a collaborative cross-sector research project involving kōhanga-, kura- and university-based researchers. It focused on tamariki moving from kōhanga reo to kura classrooms and examined the development of an 'akoranga whakawhiti' or 'transition programme' that was based across Kōhanga Reo o Ngā Kuaka and Tōku Māpihi Maurea Kura Kaupapa Māori in Hamilton.

### Aims

The overarching research question for this project was: Pēhea rā te āhuetanga me te kōunga o ngā whakawhitinga mai i te kōhanga ki te kura mō ngā tamariki, whānau, kaiako me te hāpori?—What do effective transitions from kōhanga to kura look like, feel like, and sound like, for tamariki, whānau, kaiako and the community?

The project aimed to provide important new insights into learning and teaching in Māori-medium settings and into ways of enhancing transitions from Māori-medium early childhood education to Māori medium classrooms. The project aimed to do this by investigating four aspects of kōhanga to kura transition, which have been developed alongside the four principles of Te Whāriki:

- Whakamana: Opportunities tamariki are given to take responsibility for their own learning and assessment;
- Ngā hononga: The extent that the collaborative kaupapa integrates kura wāhanga ako to foster emerging understandings of tamariki;
- Whānau tangata: Roles that parents, wider whānau and kaiako have, as transitions for kōhanga tamariki are also in effect transitions for parents and whānau;
- Kotahitanga: Ways the akoranga whakawhiti supports learning and development by building on existing working theories and interests of tamariki.

### Why was this research important?

There has been relatively little research on the transition experiences of tamariki and their whānau in Māori medium education contexts. Transition to kura is of major significance to both kōhanga and kura as they reflect whānau aspirations. Successful transitions to kura for tamariki in kōhanga reo settings are critical, as there is evidence that efforts to regenerate te reo Māori in kōhanga reo and in Māori medium early childhood settings may be being lost at the school gate.

### What we did

#### Data

The project began with a survey of Waikato kura that provided some baseline understandings of the range of kura transition strategies in the area. Following this survey, the project the kōhanga and kura began sharing teaching and learning information and planning collaboratively from a blend of *Te Whāriki*, *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa* and *Te Marautanga-ā-Kura*. Kaiako researchers collected information through classroom observations and learning portfolios, and through formal interviews and informal conversations with tamariki. Parents/whānau, and kaiako were interviewed about their experiences and views of transitions by university researchers.

### Analysis

Qualitative and quantitative data were analysed collaboratively. Research hui were held up to twice a term to share and discuss information and data that kaiako researchers and university researchers collected about teaching and learning in the transition programme, ending in a two-day analysis wānanga/retreat. Interviews were analysed thematically to identify key factors that helped to strengthen effective transitions from kōhanga to kura. Programme documents, classroom observations and research hui discussions were also analysed to identify ways in which the kōhanga and kura curricula, along with wāhanga ako from *Te Marautanga o Aotearoa*, were being integrated in planning and teaching.

### Findings

Our findings identified the importance of viewing and understanding 'transition' through kaupapa lenses—in terms of its significance to the ongoing growth, development and evolution of a shared kaupapa. They reinforced whanaungatanga as of fundamental significance for strengthening kaupapa Māori education pathways. Supporting and strengthening kōhanga-kura transitions also involves (re)establishing shared knowledge of the kaupapa that drive Māori medium programmes and practices, and formally planning for, nurturing and enacting an ongoing relationship with a strong focus on teaching and learning.

### Our partners

Our partners are Te Kōhanga Reo o Ngā Kuaka and Tōku Māpihi Maurea Kura Kaupapa Māori. The researchers from the Kōhanga are Tere Gilbert (tumuaki), Tirau Anderson, Teina Hakaraia and Te Manu Pohatu (kaiako). The Kura researchers are Laura Hawksworth (tumuaki) and Dorie Olliver (kaiako).

### Contact details

Margie Kahukura Hohepa: [margie.hohepa@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:margie.hohepa@waikato.ac.nz)  
Ph: +64 (7) 856 4466 ex 7874



Front: Tirau Anderson  
Middle: Vanessa Paki, Margie Hohepa  
Back: Dorie Olliver, Laura Hawksworth