**A Māori Focused Resource for English Teachers**

He waka eke noa

We are all in this together

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In our school 25% of our students are Māori and this study was undertaken to investigate ways to improve their achievement and locate resources that might enhance their learning experiences in their English classrooms.

I began my investigation with the students, asking them about their experiences with the subject. I visited Auckland schools recommended to me, attended the national English conference in Hastings and surveyed teachers via the English Online forum. I have read the Rangiātea Project case studies, Russell Bishop’s writing, Ka Hikitia and Te Kotahitanga material, Anne Milne’s *Colouring in the White Spaces*, the ERO report on *Promoting Success for Maori Students* and consulted with staff at Foundation Studies, University of Otago. A lot of my time has been spent locating and reading resources suitable for the classroom which I hope may be of use to other English teachers. The report has three sections; What the Students Say, What the Experts Say and Resources for the Classroom.

**What The Students Say**

Of the students I surveyed, nearly all thought that English was quite important or very important. They recognised it as a subject which would help them get a job, as a subject which improves their writing, speaking and reading and as a subject which is part of everyday life.

When asked what they enjoy in English there was a strong preference for film, creative writing and speeches. Many students found essay writing the most challenging thing about the subject, followed by the skills of interpreting text and understanding language features in a piece of work.

They gave much advice about how their English teacher might help them be more successful in the classroom. The most common request was for one-to-one conferencing and clear guidelines on how to improve. They were open to constructive criticism and praise and requested firm deadlines that they were pushed to meet. They preferred a teacher who was encouraging and used positive reinforcement. They liked to feel they could ask for help without feeling “dumb”. There was a strong appreciation of any teacher who used te reo Māori in the classroom, even simple things like a greeting or instruction. Some students felt uncomfortable being singled out as the spokesperson for all things Māori.

Teachers who care and take an interest in them were highly rated by the students. They appreciated schools that put an emphasis on Māori achievement and who pushed them “to think of our future, not just our present.”

**What The Experts Say**

Russell Bishop in *EDtalks* challenges us all with the question “What does a classroom feel like where Māori students feel comfortable? “ It is up to us, as English teachers, to create classrooms where our Māori students can experience culturally appropriate opportunities within their learning. I have divided this section into a summary of five key aspects educationalists believe contribute to the successful teaching of Māori students: the basics, creating relationships, relevant learning contexts, monitoring of student achievement and using the data.

**The Basics**

“Everything we do in the classroom either validates or undermines students’ growing sense of identity” - *Mel’s Story*, TKI

* Have a department vision for your Māori students.
* Reject deficit theorising and have high standards and expectations for all Māori students. “They don’t expect less of you because you’re Māori…They want you to be the best you can be” (student at Opotiki College)
* Pronounce and use Māori names and words correctly.
* Develop Māori vocabulary and whakatauki appropriate to your English learning area.
* Push your Māori students to achieve, using goal setting.
* Employ student-focused teaching.
* Develop your own understanding of local kawa and tikanga and attend Māori cultural events.

**Creating Relationships**

“It is the responsibility of every teacher to get to know the students and develop a good relationship with them” (Rangiātea Project - Opotiki College)

* “The students learn best when they are taught by someone who likes them”. Rangiātea Project principal.
* Build positive student-teacher relationships which include whānau.
* Go beyond knowing about students’ academic achievements; learn what they are good at outside the classroom too.
* Provide opportunities for 1:1 time to increase their understanding and potential for success.
* Use tuakana/teina (buddy systems) to help promote learning. Many teachers advised that the teacher should choose the group members in larger groups.
* Contact whānau when things go right, not just when there are concerns.

**Relevant Learning Contexts**

Ask yourself “What strategies does your department use to build culturally responsive contexts for Māori students within your programmes?” (TKI)

* Create learning context where Māori students can contribute to your class, contexts that are responsive to the culture of the student.
* “Vindicate the voices of Māori students. Open it up for students to bring their cultures into the classroom; their histories, stories and deeds of ancestors, their marae, their land”. Maria Tibble, *EDtalks*.
* Thematic approaches in English have been very successful in many schools, for example, *Made in Aotearoa – Our Voices* which looks at literature and issues in New Zealand.
* Anne Milne challenges teachers “to raise our own awareness of the effect of whiteness on our thinking and practice”. She speaks of the need to “develop programmes that deliver both academic achievement and cultural identity, language and knowledges”.
* One school developed a Te Reo Pākeha English course which focused on Māori writers and literature related to Māori.

**Monitoring Student Achievement**

“If we can investigate our own responsibilities, then we can and will make a difference to our students” (Principal, Hamilton Girls’ High School)

* Deans and teachers need to identify Māori students who need extra support early on so that plans can be put in place for them to achieve and progress. One school ran a literacy class for Māori students slightly behind in literacy skills. They met three times a week for one term to help them get up to speed.
* Set goals with Māori students and monitor them. Let students know where they need to take their learning.
* Maintain teacher responsiveness to Māori learners.
* Identify issues/challenges to student learning and discuss strategies to deal with these.
* Track students’ progress. Some schools run co-construction meetings to track their Māori students across their subjects.
* Provide extra opportunities for study and catch ups, where possible.

**Using the Data**

Ask yourself, “How do you use Māori achievement data to inform your department practice?” (TKI)

* English departments need to gather and analyse Māori achievement patterns and create targets for their learning.
* Use open discussion of Māori student results to help teachers develop teaching strategies that are more effective.
* Get on-going feedback from the students on what they are learning and, from that, determine areas for development or change.

**Advice From Tertiary Providers**

For tertiary education success, Māori students need:

* to build self-efficacy
* report writing skills
* self-reflection skills
* essay writing skills
* the ability to read and understand unfamiliar texts
* presentation skills
* an understanding of Māori history and the Treaty of Waitangi.

**Māori Resources for English Teachers**

Some of these resources have been tried and tested (but not all) and some are suggestions from other teachers. Not all the texts in this resource are by or about Māori; some are recommendations of texts that Māori students have responded well to and enjoyed. Many teachers spoke of how their students empathised with issues-based themes of work such as identity, discrimination and social issues.

**Māori Visual Texts**

*Boy*

*Matariki*

*Mt Zion* (with Stan Walker)

*Rain of the Children* – Vincent Ward’s doco-drama of Puhi. Study guide available online.

*The Man Who Lost His Head* – excellent for culture clash. On *You Tube* in 8 parts

*Whale Rider*

**Māori Short Films**

*2 Cars, One Night*

*Falling Sparrows*

*Kerosene Creek*

*Taua* (on *You Tube*)

*Turangawaewae*

**Films which have been used successfully with Māori Students**

*Avatar*

*Blind Side*

*Bride and Prejudice*

*Coach Carter*

*The Colour Purple* (NCEA Level 2)

*Coffee and Allah* (short film)

*The Descendants* (Level 2)

*District 9* (Level1-2)

*Do the Right Thing* (Level 2-3)

*Freedom Writers*

*Gallipoli*

*The Help*

*In the Name of the Father* (Level 2)

*Juno* (Level 1-2)

*Lovelock – short film on You Tube*

*Minority Report* (Level 2)

*No 2*

*Of Mice and Men*

*North Country*

*The Orator* (Level 1-2)

*Rabbit Proof Fence*

*Remember the Titans*

*The Sapphires*

*The Secret Life of Bees*

*Sione’s Wedding*

*Slumdog Millionaire*

*Tsotsi* (Level 2-3)

*What’s Eating Gilbert Grape* (Level 1)

**Extended Texts**

Broughton, John, Mi*chael James Manaia.*  Study notes [www.centrepoint.co.nz](http://www.centrepoint.co.nz) (serious swearing)

Duff, Alan, *Once were Warriors; State Ward*

Edwards, Mihi, *Mihipeka* (See Steve Webb’s unit of work on ESOL online)

Hair, David, *The Bone Tiki -* Year 10. (Protagonist meets Māori legends. Harper Collins Publishers website has a unit to go with this book. There are four more books in the series)

George, James, *Ocean Roads* (not youth fiction)

Grace, Patricia, *Tu; Baby No Eyes; Mutuwhenua; Cousins*

Hulme, Keri, *The Bone People*

Ihimaera, Witi, *Whale Rider; Bulibasha*

Kelleher, Victor, *Taronga* (Year 10)

Morey, Kelly Anne, *On an Island With Consequences Dire* (may be too adult – I haven’t read it.)

Smith, Briar Grace, *Purapurawhetu*

Te Pou, Matt, *Against The Odds* (evolution of the New Zealand Māori rugby team)

Tipene, Tim, *Kura Toa* (used with lower level Year 9)

**Extended Texts that Māori students have enjoyed**

Blackman, Malorie, *Noughts and Crosses*

Catran, Ken, *Letters From the Coffin-Trenches*

Dawe, Ted, *Thunder Road* (resource kit on Longacre Press website -Year 10)

Hager, Mandy, *Smashed* (Level 1)

Hinton,S.E., *The Outsiders*

Hosseini, Khaled, *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (Level 2-3)

Kidd, Sue Monk –*The Secret Life of Bees*

Lee, Harper, *To Kill a Mockingbird* (Level 1-2)

McBride, James, *The Colour of Water*

Mah, Adeline Yen, *Chinese Cinderella* (Year 9-10)

Marchetta, Melina, *Looking for Alibrandi* (Level 1)

Marsden, John, *Letters From the Inside* (Level 1)

Shakespeare, William, *Othello*

Stockett, Kathryn, *The Help*

Zephaniah, Benjamin, *Gangsta Rap*

**Short Stories**

This genre produces the highest number of texts by Māori writers and with Māori focus. Huia publishers have a series of short stories by Māori writers and currently have in stock volumes #3,4, 6 and 9. Also useful are the *Te Ao Mārama* volumes edited by Witi Ihimaera

Arathimos, Michalia, *Mereiata and the Birds* (found in *Lost in Translation NZ Stories* ed. Marco Sonzogni Vintage 2000). A wonderful story of the rehabilitation of a girl after jail. Relationships, identity.

Davis, Willie, *Ka Kite Bro* (could be used with *The Red Sari* if exploring cultural differences); *Stage Struck* (in the collection *Like Wallpaper* ed. Barbara Else. Random House has Teachers’ Notes

Grace, Patricia, *The Geranium; Bean; The Hills; Manners Street Blues* (vol 5 *Te Ao* *Mārama*). These latter two could be used with Ihimaera’s *Passing Time, Going for the Bread,* et. al.

Ihimaera, Witi, *Passing Time; Dustbins; The Child* and many others. There is a powerful extract from *Bulibasha* in *Te Ao Mārama, Vol 5* which looks at the sentencing of a Māori in court.

Gadd, Bernard, *Love Story*

Hilliard, Noel, *The Absconder*

Hobo, Richard, *Eight Dozen Beer and Nothing to Do*

Jones, Shona, *The Singing* (found in *Huia Short Stories 1995,* a story that draws connections to home and belonging)

McKinnon, Kingi, *Hohepa’s Goodbye* (found in *Huia Short Stories 1995,* a beautiful story of a young boy’s fear as he faces his Nanny’s death)

Makereti, Tina, *Once Upon a Time in Aotearoa* (David Hill says this volume of short stories is from a new writer whose inventiveness and empathy mark her as one to watch. I haven’t read them though). Published by Huia.

Moffat, John, *Te Taonga* (from *Huia Short Stories 1995,* a mysterious story of how the dead live on)

Morseth, Martha, *Waka Ama Warrior*

Taylor, Apirana, *Ki Te Ao* (a collection of short stories); *The Kumara Plant* (a story of hope as Pomara tries to extricate himself from gang culture); *Fish Heads*; *A Question of Aroha* (a Māori/Pakeha relationship and exploration of aroha – found in the book *Lost in Translation*)

Tawhai, Alice, *Everything You Hear* (mostly suited for older students. A powerful story ending in the suicide of a young man wrongly accused, so may not suit many. Can be found in the book *Lost in Translation*).

Tawhai, Alice: From her book *Luminou*s (Huia Publishers, 2007) the following stories could work: *Old Ways* (a young boy’s relationship with his aged Uncle); *The Golden Lotus* (Ming works in her family restaurant); *Butterflies and Moths* (Glory finds the skeleton of a baby); *Scars* (a fantastic story of a young man who wants to be a soldier); *Drowning* ( a young mother’s battle with alcohol); and *Māori Art* (a superbly structured story tracing a whakapapa through art).

Tawhai, Alice: From her book *Festival of Miracles* (Huia Publishers 2005); *The Festival of Miracles* ( a tragedy knocks a young woman, suited to older readers); *The Fairies in the Marae* (patupaiarehe, mystical and magical); *The Magic Taro* (a Samoan story of faith); *Perfect Things* (a young child discovers a dead body); *Maggot Boy* (a fantastic story to use for bullying); *Precious Alice* (a destructive friendship – use with caution), and *Box of Birds* (experience and memory – Auckland setting)

Waikato, TC, *Ten* (found in *Huia Short Stories 9*. A great story about courage, shame and taniwha).

**Poetry**

*Voices of the Pacific* – *A Poetry Resource*, Pearson 2006 is a very useful text. Poems marked with an asterisk below are found in the book. Also consider using moteatea, traditional Māori chants utilising song poetry.

Campbell, Alistair Ariki –*An Old Chief Watches Young Men Exercising On Kapiti\*; Maui’s Whare \*; Death of a Friend\** (a friend dies in World WII)

Carter, Jacq, *Powhiri\** (sadness turning to a positive experience)

Colquhoun, Glenn – many examples

Hinewirangi, *Earth Mother\** (Papatuanuku’s voice)

Marsh, Selina Tusitala, *Fast Talking PI*

Mitcalfe, Barry, *Word of Te Whiti\** (Parihaka)

Plumb, Vivienne, *Waitangi Day, Porirua\**

Sullivan, Robert, *Maui Tosses the Hook\**

Taylor, Apirana, *Hinemoa’s Daughter* ([www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/features/taonga/taylor.asp](http://www.nzepc.auckland.ac.nz/features/taonga/taylor.asp) for poem and recordings); *Parihaka* (audio version on his website)

Tuwhare, Hone, *No Ordinary Sun; The Old Place; The Sea to the Mountains; Ru-au-moko*\* (a guide for travellers)

**Visual/Audio Texts**

*Hinemoa and Tutanekai* – MP3 version on Huia Publishers’ website (8 minutes). Audio only but would be a fantastic one to use with *Romeo and Juliet*

*Slip of the Tongue,* Adriel Luis (on *You Tube*. What’s your ethnic makeup?)

*Party in the Car,* Level 2 resourcefound at [www.education.nzta.govt.nz](http://www.education.nzta.govt.nz)

*Game of Life,* Maisey Rika’s music video about making good and bad choices. It begins with a karakia and I was given this translation of it “Let us pray. Oh heavenly father, we thank you for your generosity, compassion and worldly treasure handed down to us all. Please take care of those who are imprisoned and those who are in disability homes; be generous to those who live in poverty. Guide us on a pathway of righteousness, of truth, of well-being and enlightenment to achieve our dreams, the vision of our ancestors. I pray to you Matua Kore (Supreme Being). You are the beginning and end of all things. For ever and ever, Amen.

*Tuia, Te Heke,* Ariana Tikao’s music videos

Def Poetry performances – not for the faint hearted! Possibilities could include *White* (Nafeesa); *Try Being a Lady* (Sista Queen – heaps of swearing though); *POW* (Alicia Keys), *Immigrant* (Wyclef). Good luck listening to them all!

**Textbooks and Helpful Websites**

[www.huia.co.nz](http://www.huia.co.nz) Books that focus on Māori

[www.reading.slanza.org.nz](http://www.reading.slanza.org.nz) Good ideas for themes years 9-13

[www.literacy-english-esol.wikispaces.com/Text+Suggestions](http://www.literacy-english-esol.wikispaces.com/Text+Suggestions) Text suggestions by genre

[www.readingrockets.org/strategies/reciprocal\_teaching/](http://www.readingrockets.org/strategies/reciprocal_teaching/) Reciprocal reading, a good tool for reading comprehension

Dinah O’Meara, *NCEA Level 1.* Includes activities for *Whakapapa* (Apirana Taylor) and *Meriata and the Birds*

*English with Attitude* Pearson texts. Useful were *Wrong Side of the Tracks; Addicted to Adrenaline; Rhythm in our Bones; How Deep Do You See?*

**Other Suggestions**

Use of school journals with lower literacy students

Use of whakatauki – the succinct use of metaphor to convey thoughts

Children’s book such as Jennifer Beck, *Remember That November* (Parihaka); Chris Szekely, *Rahui*  (a child dies); Robyn Kahukiwa, *Matatuhi*  (identity)

**References and Acknowledgments**

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Ihimaera, Witi, *Te Ao Marama, Vol 5,* Reed, 1996

Ka Hikitia, www.minedu.govt.nz/kahikitia

McMenamin, Michael, New Plymouth Boys’ High School, Sabbatical report

Milne, Anne, *Colouring in the White Spaces; Reclaiming Cultural Identity in Whitestream Schools*

O’Meara, Dinah, *NCEA Level 1*, Pearson

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Te Kotahitanga, www.tekotahitanga.tki.org.nz/

TKI English Snapshots

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