

# Te Kāwai Kūmara: the development and synchronous delivery of a postgraduate programme across multiple sites

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Author: Tānia Ka'ai

## Contents

Executive summary	1
Key findings	1
Introduction	2
About the project	3
About the MA in Te Reo Māori	5
Technology-enabled delivery and learning	7
Growing capacity and capability	10
Cultivating collaboration	13
Project team reflections	16

This project was supported through the Ako Aotearoa National Project Fund 2008.

PUBLISHED BY  
Ako Aotearoa –  
The National Centre for Tertiary Teaching Excellence  
PO Box 756  
Wellington 6140

ISBN: 978-1-927202-00-5 (online)  
<http://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/te-kawai-kumara>

October 2014



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## **Kāore te kūmara e kōrero mō tōna reka**

*The kūmara does not say how sweet it is – one does not extol one's own virtues*

A proverb illustrating the Māori inclination to be unassuming and modest in the midst of achievement

### **Executive summary**

The aims of Te Kāwai Kūmara project were:

1. to grow both the capacity and capability of scholars in te reo Māori
2. to extend students' and lecturers' skill and comfort with using ICT and digital technologies
3. to cultivate collaborative relationships and arrangements between institutions and scholars.

The vehicle for pursuing these aims was the development and synchronous delivery of a common postgraduate programme, a taught Master of Arts (MA) in Te Reo Māori, across multiple sites, facilitated by collaborative inter-institutional partnerships and digital technologies.

This innovative project provided valuable insight into the way new technologies foster collaboration, and yielded learnings about the challenges and benefits of multi-party collaboration in programme design and delivery. The MA in Te Reo Māori addresses the dearth of provision of programmes at this level across the country, and the project contributed to the revitalisation of te reo Māori, a minority language in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Te Kāwai Kūmara has provided an opportunity for a consolidated national response to Māori language learning at the postgraduate level. If the issue of technological scalability is resolved, and the genuine desire of tertiary education institutions to collaborate is confirmed, there exists the potential for the MA in Te Reo Māori to be offered as one qualification delivered out of the eight universities through digital technologies and resources. For this opportunity to be viable, each of the institutions must have appropriate and compatible equipment to enable teaching across all sites.

With the support of digital Māori-language resources provided by Te Ipukarea, teachers and learners involved in Te Kāwai Kūmara could be on the cusp of transforming Māori language at the postgraduate level. By producing a critical mass of scholars who are digitally literate and fluent in te reo Māori, teachers and learners are contributing to the revitalisation of the Māori language.

### **Key findings**

1. It is critical that students are inducted into the programme as distance learners so they can understand the support services available to them. This can be achieved by either factoring in a wānanga (ā-tinana) before the programme begins, or through an online induction/tutorial.
2. It is critical that staff have received appropriate training on how to use the technology prior to teaching on the programme.
3. Institutional competitiveness is a huge barrier to the establishment of this programme as a shared Master of Arts in Te Reo Māori across all tertiary education organisations, a programme which could utilise the talents and expertise of a range of staff from across institutions (staff with high-quality reo and extensive knowledge of the subject area).

4. Isolation can be avoided for students by taking advantage of support programmes such as the Māori and Pasifika Postgraduate Students Wānanga held one weekend a month during the academic year, and writing retreats held twice a year.
5. Te Kāwai Kūmara programme is unique in that it offers 90 points out of 120 points of credit towards the paper for students who produce evidence of either a certificate from Te Panekiretanga o Te Reo Māori, or a Māori translator's licence from Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori. Students are only required to do the Research Methods paper (worth 30 points) and either a full thesis or an exegesis (dissertation and a portfolio).
6. The programme fostered collaboration between institutions and participation from staff and students who wanted to see te reo Māori flourish, and raise the quality of the reo being taught in the tertiary sector.

## Introduction

Te Kāwai Kūmara was selected for funding by Ako Aotearoa as it offered something unique: the development and synchronous delivery of a common postgraduate programme – a taught Master of Arts in Te Reo Māori – across multiple sites, facilitated by collaborative inter-institutional partnerships and digital technologies.

In addition to delivering the MA, the project aimed to:

- build the research capability and capacity of Māori learners by supporting them using advanced digital technologies, including smartboards and videoconferencing
- develop a cohort of Māori academics capable of supervising to completion thesis-level students of te reo Māori
- help to focus other tertiary education organisations on collaborating to build Māori postgraduate scholarship
- enhance the digital literacy of learners and educators of the Māori language.

It was expected this innovative project would provide valuable insight into the ways new technologies foster collaboration, and yield learnings about the challenges and benefits of multi-party collaboration in programme design and delivery. Of additional appeal was the contribution the project would make to the revitalisation of te reo Māori, which is a minority language in Aotearoa New Zealand.

The MA programme was designed to extend the scope of Te Panekiretanga o te Reo Māori<sup>1</sup>, hosted by Te Wānanga o Aotearoa (TWOA), which specialises in advanced competence in te reo and tikanga Māori. During the project's design phase, consultation with Te Panekiretanga resulted in agreement that its graduates would be offered the opportunity through Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) to apply for up to 90 points (that is, four of the degree's five compulsory papers) as credit towards the MA in Te Reo Māori.

Te Kāwai Kūmara is a collaborative project of Te Ipukarea<sup>2</sup> – The National Māori Language Institute, which works as a collaborative hub across seven tertiary-level providers from five geographical regions. Leveraging existing partnerships, Professor Tania Ka'ai at Auckland University of Technology (AUT) led the project, connecting academic staff and students from AUT, Victoria University of Wellington (VUW) and the Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology (CPIT).

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<sup>1</sup> Te Panekiretanga o te Reo Māori – The Institute of Excellence in the Māori Language was established in June 2004 and specialises in advanced competence in te reo Māori and tikanga.

<sup>2</sup> Te Ipukarea, the National Māori Language Institute, is a collaboration between: Te Ātaarangi, Victoria University of Wellington, Te Wānanga o Aotearoa, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, the University of Canterbury, Lincoln University and Auckland University of Technology. It was established in 2008 to promote excellence in scholarship, teaching and research in the Māori language, and has become a hub for collaboration across the tertiary education institutions involved.

Seven students from across the three centres took the course, a reflection of the small and fragmented population of potential postgraduate students specialising in te reo Māori. Previously, there had been no obvious pathway to an advanced degree in te reo Māori for these students as none of the institutions involved offered a postgraduate-level qualification in te reo Māori. While the establishment of the degree was settled at AUT, it was to the benefit of all three institutions and TWoA; it provided no competitive threat but rather offered opportunities for involvement for staff and students alike across the institutions.

An independent evaluation of the immediate and longer-term impact of the project was conducted on its conclusion by Rachael Tuwhangai in late 2010<sup>3</sup>. Her evaluation provides insights into the Kāwai Kūmara project, which will be of interest and relevance to anyone considering similar postgraduate course delivery via this medium.

Tuwhangai notes that although not without its challenges, the MA pilot programme provided the vehicle for the transformation of te reo Māori postgraduate teaching and learning. She concludes (2010: 45) that Te Kāwai Kūmara is 'an exemplary model of innovation, where technology has been used as an enabler; a mechanism to bring about equity and advancement, through education in Te Reo Māori', and that the collaboration of the parties involved serves to advance 'a greater cause, one of language and cultural regeneration'.

## About the project

Te Kāwai Kūmara has grown out of the agenda established by Te Ipukarea – The National Māori Language Institute. Te Ipukarea addresses the need for a coordinated and determined approach to improving the effectiveness and efficiency of Māori-language education, by taking full advantage of modern digital technologies and actively creating blended learning environments which can contribute to the revitalisation of the Māori language in Aotearoa New Zealand for future generations.

It is one thing to reach the homes of a minority language community, but in order for the language to survive and flourish in an increasingly globalised world, it is critical that the giant leap is taken to embrace information, digital and media technologies as a way of dialoguing with the language's community both nationally and globally. An example of this was the establishment of the Māori Television Service in Aotearoa New Zealand which has had a significant impact, increasing the frequency of the use of Māori language in New Zealand homes.

<sup>3</sup> R. Tuwhangai (2010). *Te Kāwai Kūmara: A Pilot for the Synchronous Delivery of a Common Postgraduate Programme in Te Reo Māori Across Multiple Sites*. Evaluation Report. The full evaluation report can be accessed through the Ako Aotearoa website.

### Te Kāwai Kūmara

Te Kāwai Kūmara literally means 'the creeping runners of the kūmara plant'. The kūmara was the most tapu (valued) crop of Māori in traditional times. This is reflected in the many whakataukī (aphorisms) and rituals relating to its cultivation, which required care, skill and attention. Rongomarae-roa is the atua (ancestral being of continual influence) of the kūmara and cultivated foods.

The figurative significance of the project's name is this: if the kūmara (that is, the Māori language) is nurtured carefully, then its kāwai will have the chance to grow and extend into all centres of Māori language teaching and learning. Its cultivation will yield quality Māori language graduates and enable the language's survival and regeneration.

There is ongoing debate about what the optimal context and conditions for effecting Māori-language revitalisation are, including debate concerning the education sector about:

- the types of programmes
- the curriculum
- the delivery of the curriculum
- classroom language use and activities
- learning spaces
- language materials
- the quality of teacher education and professional development programmes available for Māori language teachers.

In recent times, many Māori language teachers have come to see advantages in using information, digital and media technologies, which give Māori language learners immediate and ongoing access to new channels of communication. These technologies do not replace traditional face-to-face teaching, instead, they complement it, fostering a blended learning environment where language learners can maximise their language development.

It was against this background that Te Kāwai Kūmara emerged. The project team recognised that if Māori language learning does not exploit information, digital and media technologies, it is likely to lose much of its appeal to prospective learners, especially the younger generation for whom these technologies are commonplace.

There are few native speakers of Māori remaining who are involved in teaching Māori language in the tertiary sector. Graduates of Te Panekiretanga o te Reo Māori are probably the next tier of the people most qualified to teach Māori language. In the Te Kāwai Kūmara pilot, all the teachers delivering papers were native speakers and/or repositories of Māori knowledge, graduates of Te Panekiretanga o te Reo Māori, Māori academics with PhDs or enrolled in a PhD programme of study. This demonstrates the value of the project nationally and the potential contribution of the project to improving the quality of Māori language teaching at the postgraduate level within tertiary education organisations nationally.

## **Project aims**

In addition to developing and delivering the pilot MA in Te Reo Māori, the goals of Te Kāwai Kūmara were:

1. to grow both the capacity and capability of scholars in te reo Māori
2. to extend students' and lecturers' skill and comfort with using ICT and digital technologies
3. to cultivate collaborative relationships and arrangements between institutions and scholars.

## **Project workstreams**

This project had two workstreams:

1. the development and piloting of a comprehensive suite of digital technologies, capable of delivering content and supporting interactive teaching and learning across multiple sites
2. the development of a best-practice curriculum for teaching and learning the Māori language at the postgraduate level, through the creation of a common Master of Arts in Te Reo Māori programme across the participating institutions.

## About the MA in Te Reo Māori

### Curriculum

The curriculum for the MA in Te Reo Māori was approved by the Committee on University Academic Programmes (CUAP) and was piloted in the second semester of 2009 and the first and second semesters of 2010.

The curriculum included the following papers:

- *Tikanga Rangahau: Research Methodologies*
- *Tuhinga Totoko: Creative Writing*
- *Kōrero Whakareī: Māori Language Styles and Genre*
- *Te Whanaketanga o te Reo: Language Change*
- *Tikanga: Māori Protocols and Customary Practices*
- *Kaupapa Motuhake: Mātauranga Māori*
- *Te Tuhinga Whakapae: Thesis* (written in reo Māori, the topic normally relating to language planning, revitalisation or decline and/or endangered languages).

The papers utilised interactive learning, using a combination of methodologies including lectures, seminars, group learning, independent research, student presentations and self-directed learning for the relevant papers.

The learning methodologies were complemented by use of digital technologies and resources. See section 5 of this report for the technologies used to deliver the MA programme. It is planned to make papers available online, supported by websites and access to digital resources for independent study, as well as teaching through videoconferencing and smartboard technologies.

### Teaching times

To suit the needs of students enrolled in the MA in Te Reo Māori, papers were normally taught on weekends. Papers worth 15 points were normally taught from 6.00 to 9.00 pm on Fridays, while 30-point papers were normally taught on Saturdays and Sundays from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm.

### Assessment

All assessments for this programme were in te reo Māori, including the tuhinga whakapae (thesis). They were designed to assess both receptive and productive language skills, creative writing skills and critical thinking and analytical skills.

Students entering the programme were expected to already have a high degree of competency in Māori.

### Teachers

The teaching team was drawn from across the three sites in the Te Kāwai Kūmara pilot in the first instance: Te Ara Poutama at AUT, VUW's Te Herenga Waka Marae and Te Puna Wānaka at CPIT. The team were either native speakers, repositories of Māori knowledge, graduates of Te Panekiretanga o te Reo or Māori and/or academics with PhDs or enrolled in a PhD programme of study. Over time, additional staff would be added from new participating institutions.

## Te Kāwai Kūmara plot project teaching team



**Project Leader:** Professor Tania Ka'ai

### Teaching Team Members:



Dr Rangi Mātāmua



Jason King



Te Ripowai Higgins



Hana O'Regan



Haani Huata



Dr Poia Rewi

### Graduate profile

The programme intended to produce graduates from the MA in Te Reo Māori who would have developed a broad range of research techniques, together with advanced analytical, planning and critical-thinking skills. In addition, graduates would, through the use of digital platforms, have developed detailed and advanced knowledge of te reo Māori. Graduates would be able to interpret qualitative and quantitative data and critically examine and evaluate information in te reo Māori.



## Technology-enabled delivery and learning

A distinctive feature of the Te Kāwai Kumara project was the employment of digital technologies for the learning and teaching of the Māori language at postgraduate level. The pilot project provided valuable insights for others looking for innovative and flexible models of course delivery across multiple sites, and went some way to enhancing the general digital literacy of Māori language learners and educators.

AUT has demonstrated clear leadership in early advancements in the application of digital technologies to the teaching and learning of the Māori language. With the convergence of telephony, mobility and access to the internet, the challenges and indeed opportunities for educators to deliver learning resources effectively and efficiently are increasing. The *Te Whanake* collection and its digital resources developed by Professor John Moorfield are the largest single set of resources for teaching and learning the Māori language (see <http://www.tewhanake.maori.nz>). The *Te Whanake* series is a set of learning resources to develop Māori language ability from beginner through to advanced levels. The series evolved out of the need for Māori language resources for teenagers and adults that reflected modern methods of teaching second languages. It contains a comprehensive set of hard-copy Māori language learning resources, including:

- four textbooks with three complementary study guides
- recorded audio and video listening and speaking exercises to accompany each chapter of the four textbooks
- three teachers' manuals
- a Māori dictionary and index to the content of the series for learners and teachers.

The most recent development for the *Te Whanake* series is the incorporation of resources online (<http://www.tewhanake.maori.nz>). The online digital resources include:

- an enhanced version of the dictionary and index (now also available as an app for small screen devices – iPhones, iPads, iPod Touches and Android phones) <http://www.maoridictionary.co.nz>
- animations with self-directed learning materials <http://animations.tewhanake.maori.nz/>
- language exercises as podcasts and streamed videos <http://podcasts.tewhanake.maori.nz/>
- Māori-language television programmes <http://tv.tewhanake.maori.nz/>

These websites are all bilingual and free.

Te Ipukarea has demonstrated competency in the delivery of a digital web-based curriculum. One of its long-term strategic goals is the development and delivery of a common postgraduate programme by its tertiary education institution members in the Māori language. Importantly, this common programme would be supported by advanced digital technologies including, but not limited to, podcasts, smartboard technology, video-cam supervision and video/digital-conferencing via the Kiwi Advanced Research Education Network (KAREN). Clearly this goal can only be achieved by having future Māori scholars who are not only highly literate in the Māori language, but who are also highly digitally literate.

Te Kāwai Kūmara extended the utility of those resources by addressing the need for innovative modes of delivery, including synchronous teaching at multiple sites by more than

one teacher. The national imperative is to grow a sustainable cohort of senior Māori scholars while people who are capable of mentoring and supervising them are still within the tertiary workforce or indeed alive. The benefits of digital technologies to deliver teaching for students have yet to be fully explored, but nascent advances suggest that there are significant opportunities to build a new collaborative model of teaching and learning reflecting a blended learning environment.

Tuwhangai's evaluation of the Te Kāwai Kūmara pilot identifies both successes and challenges related to:

- the technical requirements for delivering multi-site programmes
- the support required for students in such programmes.<sup>4</sup>

## Technology

There were some challenges associated with the purchase of technology due to each institution's policy on preferred suppliers. This meant that the equipment purchased was not the same across the three institutions, although what was purchased had similar functionalities. The lesson learned is that technicians should be involved in the planning of these projects to discuss hardware specifications with collaborative partners prior to implementation of the project, and to outline the potential connectivity and compatibility issues that may arise.

Lecturers saw the primary benefit afforded to their students by the technology as access, and they felt able to focus on the teaching, as their students seemed to know 'how to drive' the technology. Interestingly, the students themselves felt inadequate at dealing with the technology at times.

It is clear that for a technologically orientated programme of this nature and scale, more thought must be given to the technological infrastructure and support for staff and learners.

Table 1 (pages 9–10) gives a summary of the key findings from this pilot and important considerations for prospective inter-institutional technology-enabled programme delivery.

### The technology that was used

- Interactive SMART board 680i
- Tandberg Edge 95 videoconference facility: screen; audiotechnica microphone; speakers; precision HD camera; codec
- Desktop computer
- Telephone
- Broadband
- Videoconferencing bridge host (KAREN)

### How the technology was used

The MA in Te Reo Māori was delivered as a mix of reading materials and oral presentation and discussions via videoconference.

The **videoconferencing equipment** created a virtual classroom across the three sites and thus broke down institutional barriers and enabled robust communication and interaction between teachers and learners, and between the learners themselves. This was helped by the fact that the communication was in real time and not delayed.

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<sup>4</sup> R. Tuwhangai (2010: 25–29, 38–41).

The **interactive whiteboard (smartboard)** was used to show powerpoint presentations and youtube clips, and could be simultaneously annotated by the lecturer using a split screen. The notes could be saved and emailed to students. With the geographical spread of the students and teachers, there was a reliance by the students on the responsiveness of their lecturers to email queries in between lectures.

There was variation in the use of the technologies by different teaching staff, who had different levels of experience and confidence using ICT as part of course delivery and/or whose institutions were more or less advanced in the application of digital technologies.

**Table 1: Reflections on the delivery of a technologically orientated programme**

	<b>Key findings</b>	<b>Things to consider</b>
<b>Set-up and support</b>	<p>Tertiary education organisations (TEOs) had loyalties to different hardware providers</p> <p>There were connectivity and compatibility issues between TEOs</p> <p>Technicians had to create a hole (breach) in TEOs' firewalls to allow smartboard use</p> <p>One institution's technical support person was on its teaching and learning committee, and so was more attuned to the project's teaching/learning processes</p> <p>At another institution, the insufficiently established relationship between the technician and Te Reo Māori lecturer hindered progress (and had a knock-on effect with the partner institutions)</p>	<p>Discuss hardware specifications with collaborative partners to ensure all potential connectivity and compatibility issues are anticipated, to enable seamless delivery of the programme</p> <p>Understand the technological infrastructure required to deliver programmes of this nature and scale</p> <p>The technological culture and strategic goals of potential partner institutions should be clarified before collaboration begins</p> <p>Consider scalability – what would happen if more than three TEOs wished to connect at the same time?</p> <p>Establish a designated project technician</p>
<b>Maintenance</b>	<p>TEOs' system upgrades and maintenance often occurs over weekends, which is when the classes were held</p> <p>It is important to maintain and upgrade equipment; videoconferencing-type hardware may have a longer lifespan than standard computers</p>	<p>Contingency planning is important, as is input from technicians when timetabling videoconferences</p> <p>Equipment upgrades could be every five to seven years (may not need to be as often as every three years)</p>
<b>Equipment costs</b>	<p>Initial outlay of around \$33,000</p> <p>Ongoing annual cost of delivery is minimal (approximately \$4,400 per annum)</p>	<p>Estimate the cost of upgrading equipment semi-regularly</p>
<b>Learner perspective</b>	<p>The videoconferencing medium was challenging because although able to see all the people present (if the camera used a wide shot), students were unable to see people's faces up close, so the culturally important ā-tinana (in-person) element was missing from the classes. This was compounded by the use of the split screen to show video clips or presentations, making the image of the</p>	<p>Consider providing student access to a central learning management system, to keep their information together</p> <p>Proper induction to equipment required for students</p>

	<p>class members even smaller</p> <p>The variable audio quality or limited number of speakers made discussions across the sites challenging</p>	
Teacher perspective	<p>Teachers felt they needed to adapt their pedagogy to suit the technology-enabled delivery mode</p> <p>Some lecturers noted the large amount of time it took to create flip charts for use on the smartboard (due to the variety of software tools available); for this reason, only a limited range of the board's functionality was employed in course delivery</p> <p>When technology failed, the teachers relied on the students to restore it, or they undertook workarounds, such as holding the camera up to the smartboard so students from other sites could see the notes or slides (thereby taking their own class members off camera)</p>	<p>Proper induction into use of equipment required for staff</p> <p>There is a need for contingency planning for when technology fails</p>

### Student support

While students in the MA in Te Reo Māori programme had access to AUT support services as distance students, they required additional support beyond the brief for support for a typical on-campus student.

While there were contact or support people identified, students from the pilot programme felt that the project support roles were not clearly defined, and, as a result, they tended to make contact more with their site's academic staff when needing help or guidance. An introductory lecture on technology and distance learning should have been factored in.

### Growing capacity and capability

The purpose of Te Kāwai Kūmara was to support the development of the MA in Te Reo Māori as a vehicle for building the research capability and capacity of Māori scholars to advance their skills in teaching and learning through research in the Māori language, supported by advanced digital technologies.

The longer-term need to support new and emerging scholars to become supervisors of theses, particularly at the PhD level and written in the Māori language, has been identified. The number of staff currently in the tertiary sector who have supervised to completion PhDs in the Māori language is very small, and many staff are due to retire in the near future. This project marked a strategic attempt to address this issue in a comprehensive and collaborative way, by focusing tertiary education organisations on the option of collaborating to build Māori postgraduate scholarship.

In this, Te Kāwai Kūmara was a success. Tuwhangai noted (2010: 32) that:

Lecturers spoke unselfishly of their students, and the academic hopes that they had for their students to complete a postgraduate research qualification. They saw completing

such a qualification as contributing to the research environment, and therefore a positive step toward increasing their own student research capability.

She noted that two out of six lecturers had already completed a PhD, and a further three out of six lecturers were now enrolled to do a PhD. The videoconference equipment and interactive smartboard had been used for PhD supervision, to discuss potential research projects and for writing for publication.

The use of technology had given those taking part in the MA in Te Reo Māori an increased ability to participate. Feedback from students emphasised the opportunity and access that the technology had provided, and that without it, they would not have been able to start, or complete, a postgraduate qualification in such a specialised area of study as Te Reo Māori. Technology, coupled with an after-hours study timetable, became an enabler. As Tuwhangai noted:

The students were motivated to learn, and were hungry to improve their reo Māori, and could see a pathway toward scholarship, through Te Kāwai Kūmara. For all, a vision had been realised.<sup>5</sup>

At the same time, she found the programme – and particularly the use of ICT – created challenges and led to the development of new teaching techniques and learning strategies.<sup>6</sup>

### Teaching techniques

Tuwhangai's evaluation notes that the lecturers involved felt that they needed to 'up their game' and adapt their teaching pedagogy to suit the technologically enhanced delivery mode. There was a willingness to deliver the courses in this new way, despite not having done so before. The majority looked beyond potential barriers and technological challenges and just got on with the task at hand, focusing on the greater purpose of Māori language revitalisation and the creation of a critical mass of postgraduate students. They worked with dedication and passion to teach stimulating, engaging and informative postgraduate courses.

Students commented on the pedagogical techniques used by lecturers to make the intake of new information manageable:

One lecturer broke the content up into 40 minute blocks, and then gave us 'away from the screen time' to think about things. This was helpful because it gave me time to digest the content.

Our lecturer would wānanga things with us. He'd introduce us to the big idea by posing a general question, then provide us with the opportunity to work together, with other students to answer it; he'd support us throughout.

He allowed us time to just talk, before we got into the learning. He was there when we turned on the screen, sometimes just setting up his papers and things, but he was always there before us. It was like walking into a classroom, and your lecturer was there waiting for you to arrive. We got time to talk to him before class, ask questions, have a coffee with him, and stuff like that.

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<sup>5</sup> R. Tuwhangai (2010: 41)

<sup>6</sup> R. Tuwhangai (2010: 29 –36)

Other notable elements of lecturer pedagogy in this new delivery mode included lecturers who checked up on their students' progress, by keeping in constant contact in between sessions and by sending through the necessary information well in advance of their next videoconference

The ability to engage and draw students into the discussions, even in small groups such as in this pilot, is clearly critical in this kind of learning environment. It is interesting to note that the younger female students reported feeling uncomfortable with the requirement to engage, but it was unclear if this was due to their limited language knowledge or personal confidence.

One lecturer noted the importance of ā-tinana, being in the physical presence of others, an extension of kanohi ki te kanohi, as a preferred pedagogical approach to teaching, rather than 'through the screen'.

When asked if he would teach this way again, the lecturer hesitated then agreed. He said it helped to increase postgraduate student numbers, which was the bigger purpose. In essence, he was prepared to transform his preferred or customary pedagogical approach for the collective gain of the group and ultimately the revitalisation of te reo Māori.

Students also commented on the absence of the ā-tinana element. Despite being able to 'see' others on screen through the videoconference, it was not possible to have a full physical sense of the individuals involved because a wide shot was needed to ensure all class participants were in view. One student noted:

You could come to know a lecturer a little as they were usually the closest to the camera, but students were often at a distance, and didn't interact with the camera in the same way, so you didn't really get to know them, or see them up close.

### Learning strategies

Further to the centrality of the ā-tinana element for Māori students, the desire for such an experience (for example, at a wānanga) at the beginning of the course was expressed. One student suggested adding a little onto the course fees for those studying from a distance so that the costs of travel and wānanga could be coordinated by the institution, and covered by a student loan, saying:

I think I would have asked for help more, if I had met the people in my class before we started.

When asked about their coping mechanisms or strategies for challenging learning situations, the younger female students in particular mentioned that they often tended to struggle alone, or that they would ask a lecturer at their site for help. They felt too whakamā to ask for help from lecturers or other class members across sites, because they felt that they did not know them well enough, as there were no 'out of class' opportunities for the students to interact. One said:

We studied after hours and on weekends. It wasn't like I ran into the others in the cafeteria or anything, because I worked, and I guess they worked too.

One of the more mature female students took a more proactive approach and buddied up with another woman who attended her class in person:

I contacted her and drove out to meet her. I needed to, because sometimes getting responses back to my emails was taking too long. I thought if I contacted another person in the class, they might be able to help me. I haven't got my results yet, but I hope it worked.

Creating support systems between students within the class can be beneficial for learners studying from a distance or from a site different to that of their lecturer.

## Cultivating collaboration

What was special about the MA in Te Reo Māori was that, as a shared programme across tertiary education institutions, high calibre teachers of te reo Māori could be enlisted to teach on the programme without having to leave their home institutions, provided they had access to smartboard and videoconferencing technology. The days of institutional competitiveness, when institutions had to poach staff to teach this specialist subject could give way to technology-enabled collaborative course delivery.

This new approach allows staff to remain at their home location, while working as part of a whānau committed to ensuring the survival of te reo and to creating a critical mass of postgraduate-level students of te reo Māori.

The shared MA in Te Reo Māori could also benefit students financially as they would not need to travel away from their homes or preferred institution to enrol in this qualification. For example, students enrolled in reo papers with AUT who lived in Christchurch and attended classes delivered at CPIT. The use of technology, great curriculum and superb teachers made this a modern and relevant qualification and, as the first of its kind, it has the potential to really transform the way universities operate in terms of the qualifications they offer.

This project could well have an impact on schooling generally, in that the digital resources developed by Te Ipukarea to complement teaching are free to access and are streamed off the Te Ipukarea bilingual website (see [www.teipukarea.maori.nz](http://www.teipukarea.maori.nz)). These digital resources will ideally become useful for teachers, students and their families, and the wider community.

Te Kāwai Kūmara was also intended to cultivate collaboration between tertiary providers, specifically by exploring the ways in which centres of excellence and expertise can be brought together using digital technologies. The forms of collaboration identified in this project can be broadly classified as 'institutional' and 'participant', as follows<sup>7</sup>.

### Institutional collaboration

#### Intra-institutional collaboration

Intra-institutional collaboration consisted of the relationships established between the subject specialists, in this case the reo Māori teaching team, technicians and technical support staff within each institution. At one institution the technical support person was also a member of the teaching and learning committee. Intra-institutional collaboration also required the support and approval from the institution's line manager to release academic staff to lecture on a qualification offered by another institution.

#### Inter-institutional collaboration

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<sup>7</sup> The following paragraphs summarise Tuwhangai (2010: 15–20).

Inter-institutional collaboration existed at different levels. One example consisted of the relationships between 'decision makers', or high-ranking academic staff members in the partner institutions, who were committed to making Te Kāwai Kūmara work. They led by example by teaching the courses, and sacrificing their own time to nurture the students and the project through to successful completion.

Lecturers from the different institutions demonstrated their willingness to work together, and to deliver a suite of courses to make up a qualification. These lecturers were all involved in their own reo Māori communities and were nationally sought after for their expertise, so finding time to meet frequently was a challenge, with email being the most frequent form of contact for the teaching team. Scheduling meetings may be a possible area for improvement in the future.

Technicians were required to collaborate in order to provide seamless technological communication between the different institutions, which presented many challenges. It became evident, however, that if the reo Māori lecturers did not have a positive relationship with the technical support team in their own institution, then collaboration *between* institutions was severely hindered.

Te Ipukarea has established many cross-institutional and individual collaborative partnerships since its establishment. Te Kāwai Kūmara was fortunate to be able to leverage off such partnerships, making collaboration almost seamless for lecturers.

The recognition of prior learning opportunities offered through AUT enabled progression for prospective students who had completed Te Panekiretanga under the umbrella of TWoA, or who had an undergraduate degree in te reo Māori from CPIT in Christchurch. VUW offered no postgraduate qualification in te reo Māori. The development of the taught MA in Te Reo Māori qualification by AUT benefitted all four institutions, including TWoA and their students who wanted to gain a postgraduate qualification in te reo Māori without having to leave their home area. This collaborative effort and lecturer involvement was made possible by Te Kāwai Kūmara.

### **Participant collaboration**

Students and lecturers spoke of the reo Māori enthusiast/postgraduate student, who is known to endure a very individualised programme of study, having an isolating and lonely academic experience. Combining students from multiple sites into one class or cohort, under a joint qualification, through Te Kāwai Kūmara, created both a community of learners and a community of practice for the academic staff involved. No longer were lecturers and students having to work in isolation.

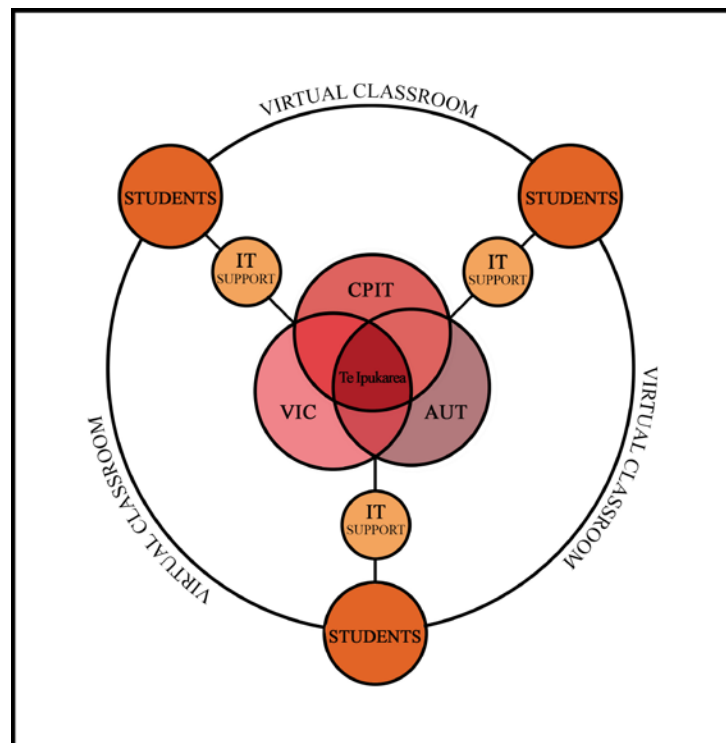
The decision taken by the collaborative partners to join forces for the collective good of postgraduate students, academic staff and the reo Māori community was a major achievement for Māoridom.

### **Project management team on collaboration**

The project management team consisted of a project coordination team (three assigned project personnel) and collaborative partner representatives. The project coordination team essentially drove and supported the project administratively and academically. They strategically identified opportunities for collaboration, founded in historic relationships, under the umbrella of Te Ipukarea. They worked in collaboration with representatives ('decision makers') from the partnering institutions, who in this case were also lecturers on the programme to deliver a postgraduate-level qualification. All collaborative partners knew each other well and had a formal alliance with Te Ipukarea, which aided the collaboration process across institutions.



**Figure 1: Project Management Structure**



The project management team together viewed the collaboration as ‘a breath of fresh air ... an opportunity to work across institutions with people, lecturers, colleagues of like mind, breaking down the barriers of isolation.’ For lecturers, Te Kāwai Kūmara provided the opportunity to share research and professional practice ideas, as well as providing a supervisory support vehicle for PhD students studying across widespread geographical regions. For postgraduate students Te Kāwai Kūmara provided an opportunity to gain access to field experts, thus contributing to a wider vision of collectively growing postgraduate student numbers. For Te Ipukarea, combining students from multiple sites would in turn provide a potential student support network, one that could assist with student recruitment and retention, and with reo Māori revitalisation.

Breaking down the ‘silos attitude’ between universities has always been difficult, but Te Kāwai Kūmara provided an example of New Zealand universities and tertiary education organisations working collaboratively to promote the sharing of resources to advance te reo. The expansion of Te Kāwai Kūmara as a pilot into an MA in Te Reo Māori would address a lack of provision of programmes of a similar nature across the country.

## Project team reflections

### Te mana o te reo

Te Kāwai Kūmara has provided an opportunity for a consolidated national response to Māori language learning at the postgraduate level. There exists the potential for the MA in Te Reo Māori to be offered as one qualification delivered out of the eight universities through digital technologies and resources, provided, of course, the institutions each have appropriate and compatible equipment to enable teaching across all sites.

In addition, as a contributing member of Te Ipukarea, Te Panekiretanga o te Reo Māori at TWoA has expressed interest in the programme as a pathway for their graduates to obtain a mainstream postgraduate qualification. This would be through AUT's Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) policy, with graduates from Te Panekiretanga o Te Reo Māori applying for RPL when applying for entry into the MA programme at AUT. The Directors of Te Panekiretanga o Te Reo Māori would then determine who is eligible for RPL and make the appropriate recommendations to the Chair of the Te Ara Poutama Postgraduate Studies and Research Committee.

### Challenges

Implementing the MA in Te Reo Māori, particularly through a multi-institution model based on the extensive use of digital technology, has been challenging. The key challenges encountered or indicated include:

- the utilisation of digital technology experienced as challenging to teaching staff – professional development is needed for teaching staff to give them the confidence to successfully use technologies
- the demands on teaching staff proved challenging in terms of:
  - meeting deadlines for submission of course handbooks and reading material
  - being able to find dates and times for regular team meetings via Skype or videoconferencing
  - developing lesson plans that take full advantage of the technologies being used
- the need to work out processes that suit all institutions
- issues of staff workload – forecast numbers suggest that supervision of students in the writing stages of their theses could create workload problems, as there are limited staff that are qualified to supervise students who are writing their theses in te reo Māori.

Conversely, there are several factors that Te Kāwai Kūmara project team believes have been central to the success of this project. These include:

- the commitment of the teaching team – some of the team were contracted by AUT and approval was given from their institution to teach a paper over and above their current workload which they did because they believed in the aims of the project; the success of the project was a direct reflection of their commitment
- the contribution of IT support people, particularly at CPIT and AUT, who oversaw the installation of the technologies at their respective sites and supported their institutions' teaching staff to become familiar with how to use the technologies
- a significant contribution came from a central Programme Administrator, who facilitated the operation of the pilot by being present at every class to turn on the videoconferencing equipment and to ensure that the other sites were connected. She also provided administrative support to the teaching team throughout the duration of the project, and provided additional IT assistance.

One team member said:

If we were to begin this project again, we would engage IT staff at the very beginning of the work, so that two teams were part of the project from the outset: the IT team and the teaching team.

Language revitalisation is a growing discipline internationally. New Zealand needs to create a skilled Māori language workforce, and address the urgent need to increase numbers in both the compulsory education and tertiary sectors. Nationally recognised experts are being drawn back into iwi initiatives and away from mainstream education, leaving enormous gaps in the system. The MA in Te Reo Māori addresses the dearth of provision of postgraduate programmes across the country.

Supported by other digital Māori-language resources produced by Te Ipukarea, teachers and learners involved in Te Kāwai Kūmara could be on the cusp of transforming Māori language teaching and learning at the postgraduate level for institutions within New Zealand's tertiary sector, while also contributing to the revitalisation of the Māori language by producing a critical mass of scholars who are digitally literate and fluent in the Māori language.