

My reo journey continues

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Andrew is continuing to create opportunities to include a greater range of kupu and kīwaha into the video and web conference resources he develops through LEARNZ virtual field trips. Image: LEARNZ.

Caption: Andrew is continuing to create opportunities to include a greater range of kupu and kīwaha into the video and web conference resources he develops through LEARNZ virtual field trips. Image: LEARNZ.

Over time, I have come to appreciate how the Māori language is intimately woven into the fabric of nature, history, customs, and beliefs. I see much more clearly now how te reo is an essential element of Māoritanga — more than just a means to communicate. In a blog I wrote last year, titled '[A Stranger in a Strange Land?](#)', I talked about why I think learning te reo is one of the best ways to develop empathy for Māori culture. In part of that blog I said that it was:

...the active learning of Māori language which I believe is the key to breaking through Pākehā paralysis to a point where Pākehā educators have an experiential understanding of

Māori language and culture, not just an intellectual understanding, to make the teaching and learning environment a properly inclusive one.

(For more information on the notion of Pākehā paralysis, watch [Alex Hotere-Barnes on EDtalks](#)).

In that blog, I also explored my own te reo Māori journey. “I’ll let you know how things are progressing in my next blog!” I said. Well, here it is!

TE REO MANAHUA MĀORI

Last year, I enrolled in [Te Reo Manahua Māori](#), an intermediate course for te reo Māori. This course is part of CORE’s [ngaiotanga/professional learning services](#), and is preceded by [Te Reo Puāwai Māori](#), the Stage 1 beginners’ course. Both courses are online, with an opportunity to attend a face-to-face hui at both the beginning and end of the course.

The courses are organised within the Moodle platform, which made the content easy to follow, flexible, and allowed for a range of different media to suit various learning styles. Additionally, the weekly Adobe Connect session was a great opportunity to connect with other course participants, to share and reinforce the week’s learning. I also found the Adobe Connect sessions helpful in a sense that I could interact with others at a similar stage of te reo learning journey, which gave me a sense of reassurance that what I was doing was of value.

COMMITMENT AND ENCOURAGEMENT

I admit that, at times, I felt somewhat overwhelmed with what I didn’t know (and that I still need to learn!) Such is the nature of learning, eh! But, making the commitment to take part in Te Reo Manahua Māori was a key step in the right direction. And it wasn’t like I felt forced to carry on with my te reo learning just because I had made this commitment — it was more that I felt encouraged, for which I give credit to the course facilitators and the way the learning experience has been structured.

NEXT STEP

Although I am no longer teaching in a classroom setting, I could certainly see how one could translate learning within the course into lessons for students. For my job as a LEARNZ virtual field trip teacher, Te Reo Manahua Māori has increased my repertoire of kupu (vocabulary), as well as the confidence to use these words; improved my whakahua (pronunciation); and I am gradually incorporating a greater range of kīwaha (idioms) into field trip videos and web conferences. My next step is continuing to search for and find opportunities to further my learning in this space.



Andrew Penny

[Andrew Penny](#) is a LEARNZ field trip teacher. He experienced great success using LEARNZ virtual field trips in the classroom when he was a teaching deputy principal. As a field trip teacher, Andrew organises and manages field trips to different parts of New Zealand. He travels to the field trip locations, and works with experts to film, write about, and photograph the learning adventure that takes place. He is also involved in the [LEARNZ website](#) presentation of these trips.