

Learning Te Reo in the South Island of New Zealand

Te Reo Māori in the South Island of New Zealand

The South Island hasn't always boasted a large Māori population, but more adults are starting to learn te reo Māori to reclaim their culture, and the younger generations are choosing to do their primary schooling in te reo.

The public library team within The Westland District council noticed this trend, and is working with Drops to support their Māori visitors, one word at a time.

Drops as the Bridge to Understanding

Most official meetings in the Westland District Council start with pōwhiri, the Māori welcoming ceremony. The Whaikōrero, or formal speech is a long and rich speech that introduces the speaker based on where they come from and who they're related to.

With the help of Drops, people on the library team went from not understanding a word of this intricate introduction, to being able to begin to identify specific words and understand them in context. This helped them feel more connected to the ceremony, even if they don't identify as Māori.

"Drops will help you begin to understand some of the words so it turns from a stream of noise into distinct words with real meaning. You might not understand all of it, but you can hear the words, and this motivates you to get curious and dig deeper." - Natasha Morris, Library Manager

The staff's experience with the Māori welcoming ceremony is just one example of how learning small chunks at a time can make a big difference.

Understanding how different te reo words are supposed to sound have helped library staff feel empowered to better pronounce Māori names.

Drops has been the tool that has helped spark more of an interest in the language, even among people that weren't necessarily curious about it.

Learning Without Barriers: Our Review Dojo and Non-Linear Style

"We all absolutely love the Review Dojo. I use it when I'm overtired or really busy at work. Rather than not doing my five minutes, I'll do a five minute review session with the Dojo instead of trying to squeeze new information into my tired brain." - Natasha Morris, Library Manager

Aside from the brain-saving tactics of the Review Dojo, the staff at the Westland District Library identified Drops as blissfully low-barrier. Not only is there little to no barrier at the moment of downloading the app, but Drops has been easy for them to use wherever they are. It's also been easy to go back to after a dry spell.

This was music to our ears. Language learning is difficult enough as it is, especially if you're trying to learn the intricacies of an indigenous language. Our goal is to make building a better language learning habit as fun and seamless as possible.

Part of that ease comes from our non-linear structure. Instead of having to make your way through restrictive levels, you can build your own learning journey within Drops. The teammates using Drops to learn te reo appreciated that they could choose their own topics, and not have to start over if they had been away for some time. With a Drops Premium membership, you can do any topic at any time, without having to wait for it to be unlocked.

"We stick to this non-linear structure because we want to empower our learners to build their own learning journey. Research shows that we learn much faster and more thoroughly when we learn a language through our interests." - Chelsea Roden, Head of Learning Content

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Drops: The Te Reo Māori Teaching Tool for NZ Schools

Situated on the North Coast of New Zealand, [Te Puru Beach School](#) serves students ages 5-13, thirty percent of which identify as having Māori ancestry.

The Resource Shortage Problem

Despite one third of the student population identifying as Māori in Te Puru, not many of them are fluent in Te Reo Māori. We spoke to Izaac Garmey, a dedicated teacher, who explained that often times, there are not enough resources for schools to accurately and thoroughly teach Te Reo Māori at different levels. In fact, many lessons are oversimplified, teaching the same words over and over again, leaving students unmotivated and under-challenged.

Drops at School: The Only App With Te Reo Māori Language Courses

Mr. Garmey started testing out different language learning apps with the express purpose of improving upon his Te Reo Māori, only to find that Drops was the only app offering a course for the language. After using the app himself, he realized it could be a great tool to share with his students. Drops is school friendly thanks to its...

- **vibrant design** that keeps students engaged
- **Word collection list** where students can view all the words they've learned
- **Practice Dojo** feature that guides them through review sessions

How Drops Fits Into the Teaching Style in NZ

For the past three months, Te Puru students have been learning Te Reo Māori with Drops at School. After implementing Drops into the lesson plan, both students and teacher have found that the...

- **Flexible digital learning** fits into the NZ style of teaching several subjects at a time
- **Non-linear app experience** makes it easier to assign by topic
- **Focus on categories vs. levels** suits all learning speeds
- **Customizable learning experience** allows students to hide the words they already know

Developing Our Te Reo Māori Course

The team behind Drops is passionate about developing language courses for at-risk, under-served languages. Adding Te Reo Māori in 2019, [The Year of Indigenous Languages](#), was an important step in honoring the language and preserving the culture.

With insights from clients like Te Puru school, we'll continue to develop our Te Reo Māori course to help make learning indigenous languages accessible to all.

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