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Performing Waiata Pōwhiri

THE LEARNING CONTEXT

This teacher's intended outcomes were for the students to:

- rehearse and perform waiata pōwhiri, paying attention to technique, intonation, and kaupapa
- perform as members of a group, singing and chanting in tune and in time and performing appropriate actions
- demonstrate an understanding of the tikanga and wairua involved in performing a waiata.

The students are already confident and competent in their singing. They're experienced performers who proudly sing songs reflecting their school community. They sing rhythmically, in tune, and with expression. They understand the significance of performing waiata pōwhiri and the kaupapa of performing appropriate actions. They take their roles seriously, expressing the aesthetic dimensions of wairua, ihi, wana, and wehi. Many of them competently assume leadership roles, an essential component of kapahaka performance. The students follow directions with ease and respond positively to teacher and peer modelling. Their teacher is a composer, and the waiata-ā-ringa is his own composition, which is recorded on *Kiwi Kidsongs 11*.

The teacher motivated the students by leading them through vocal warm-ups, modelling and directing a familiar song and adding movements. He introduced the waiata-ā-ringa "Haere Mai Rā", and the class discussed its meaning and purpose. This is the teacher's regular approach. He integrates the kaupapa and tikanga around waiata pōwhiri throughout the students' learning experiences, discussing the meaning and intent of the reo to ensure full understanding.

The teacher modelled the correct pronunciation of te reo Māori, and the students chanted back each phrase in the ūngeri (rhythm) of the waiata-ā-ringa. He modelled the rhythmic actions and taught them to the students, phrase by phrase. At first, the students practised without the music but chanted the rhythms to keep in time. Then they learned the rangi (melody) by listening to the recording and to the teacher modelling it.

Having learned the music and movement aspects of the waiata-ā-ringa, a haka, and an oriori, the students rehearsed regularly with the teacher accompanying them on guitar and no longer modelling the actions. They quickly became autonomous, listening for the musical cues to change their actions without the direction of an obvious leader.

The students performed the waiata-ā-ringa, haka, and oriori for visitors who were being welcomed to the school. Following this, the teacher checked on the students' understanding of the context by questioning them on waiata pōwhiri.

Teacher-student conversations

After the performance:

Teacher: What kind of waiata is "Haere Mai Rā"?

Michelle: A welcoming song.

Teacher: "Haere Mai Rā" is a welcoming song and a waiata ...?

Students: Waiata pōwhiri.

Teacher: It's also a waiata that has actions, so it's a waiata ...?

Students: Waiata-ā-ringa.

Teacher: Tino pai. Can you remind us, please, specifically in the pōwhiri, when we are welcoming visitors, when do we slot this waiata in?

Michelle A: After the speaker speaks.

Teacher: Ae. We put the waiata in after the whaikōrero, after the speaker, to show our support for him or her and to show our togetherness too, nē?

Students: Ae!

WHERE TO NEXT?

The next learning steps for these students could be to:

- reflect on their performance (for example, identifying strengths and areas for improvement after viewing a video recording)
- sing harmony parts in the waiata-ā-ringa
- investigate and perform another style of waiata (for example waiata poi, waiata tangi, or waiata tīrākau)

CURRICULUM LINKS

The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum

Achievement Objectives

Developing Practical Knowledge in Music (PK)

Students will identify through focused listening, and experiment with, contrasts within musical elements.

Communicating and Interpreting in Music (CI)

Students will prepare and present music, using basic performance skills and techniques, and respond to live or recorded music performances.

Understanding Music in Context (UC)

Students will identify and investigate characteristics of music associated with particular contexts, purposes, and styles in past and present cultures.

The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum, page 58

www.tki.org.nz/r/arts/curriculum/statement/pg58_e.php



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REFERENCES

Ministry of Education (2000). *The Arts in the New Zealand Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

Ministry of Education (2002). *Kiwi Kidsongs 11*. Wellington: Learning Media.



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WHAT THE WORK SHOWS: The students learned and performed a waiata-ā-ringa for a school pōwhiri. They also performed and discussed two chant styles of waiata pōwhiri: haka and oriori.



Clip 1

Progress Indicator Singing

Prepares a unison song, rehearsing the pronunciation and rhythms of the lyrics, the appropriate actions, and the tune (PK, CI, UC)

The teacher leads the chanting of te reo Māori, phrase by phrase and in the rhythm patterns of the waiata-ā-ringa they are learning. The students accurately echo back in a confident and enthusiastic manner. They have discussed the meaning of the reo and understand the purpose of this welcome song. The teacher uses kaupapa Māori teaching methods, which are often seen in the teaching of kapa haka and in other group performance settings.



Clip 2

The teacher directs the students in the actions they are to perform. They are familiar with these actions, which are typically performed in waiata-ā-ringa and reflect the meaning of the reo. The teacher counts the students in and reminds them of the actions by calling them out (for example, pakia – clap). Many of the girls perform the wiri with style, and the boys are strong and rhythmic in their haka actions.

At this stage, the teacher sings with them. They sing a cappella so that the teacher can hear all the students' voices and monitor their singing. The students perform the actions and sing the waiata-ā-ringa competently.



Clip 3

Progress Indicator Singing

Sings unison songs and chants, confidently performing three different styles of waiata pōwhiri as a group from memory (CI, UC)

The students are now in control and demonstrate their ability to perform as a community. Firstly, they perform a haka that features the boys and highlights strong kapa haka leadership. Their voices have great expression in this declamatory, highly rhythmic style of chanting. They perform all the actions with conviction and appropriate technique, playing their bodies as percussive musical instruments. They have rehearsed all aspects well to make this a quality performance. The leaders have followed the kaupapa, tikanga, and wairua of the haka with dignity and have the respect of their peers. The hā (tone colour) of their voices reflects the reo and creates a powerful welcome from the tangata whenua to the manuhiri.



Clip 4

The second waiata pōwhiri is the featured waiata-ā-ringa, "Haere Mai Rā". Again, the students lead and take control of the performance. The teacher accompanies them on guitar from the back. The students all sing and dance as rehearsed and now perform with enthusiasm, concentration, and passion that is strong and convincing, executing all aspects confidently and competently.



Clip 5

The third waiata pōwhiri is an oriori chant, and the students adhere to the kaupapa of this style of vocal performance. Their intonation is closely matched, their timing is exact, and they have mastered the nuances in rhythm, tone, intonation, and reo.

The large group performance of the three styles of waiata pōwhiri shows the students' commitment and musical achievement. Having memorised their waiata, the students demonstrate the musicianship required for each of the musical styles and their understanding of te reo Māori and the kaupapa, tikanga, and wairua of singing waiata pōwhiri.



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Clip 6

Progress Indicator

Analysing and Appreciating

Investigates the purposes of different styles of waiata pōwhiri (UC)

The teacher questions the students on their knowledge of the various styles of waiata pōwhiri. The students answer correctly and demonstrate that they can differentiate between them, citing examples of haka and waiata-ā-ringā previously performed. They tell the teacher when the waiata are to be performed at a pōwhiri (after the speakers) and share their understanding of the purposes of waiata pōwhiri.