



Helping teachers work with children when they first return to school following major traumatic or life-changing events

Hā Ora: He Hononga ki Ngā Atua  
Years 2 – 5 (Curriculum Levels 1 – 2)

# HĀ ORA:

## He Hononga ki Ngā Atua *Connecting with the Atua*

By Rawiti Hindle and Bert van Dijk

### Introduction

These are times of huge trauma, changes and uncertainties. For many of us as teachers and for our students these constant changes and uncertainties will bring about increased levels of anxiety in our everyday life. Acknowledging the close bond between Ngā Toi and Hauora presents us with opportunities to help lessen the stress, calm our mind, experience and express the richness of our being and connect strongly with our natural environment.

**Developing Presence** is a key ingredient of the following resources. It can be described as 'The ability to be sensorily alive in the moment' (van Dijk, 2016). Presence helps us to connect with self, other and environment. Connecting with Ngā Atua involves connecting with the elemental qualities within our Taiao (Environment). As human beings, we are part (not separate) of this whakapapa. We can experience being present to the different energies of the Atua through the activities in these resources, they will help to calm our minds, our bodies and be stronger in our being (wairua).

Hā ora means a breath of life. This offering is intended to support child wellbeing as they come back into their school communities after a time of challenge. Hā ora also describes having an essence full of vitality and creative energy that is central to this mahi.

Poutokomanawa is the central pole of a whareniui (meeting house). It is the heart of the whareniui, supporting the whole house and connecting earth and sky. It is a piece of art, representing ancestry and story. As a name for our collective it signifies the aim we have for our mahi: to create a space for creativity, growth and learning that supports the heart of the child.

## HĀ ORA

Makaira Waugh • Priya Gain • Rawiri Hindle • Bert van Dijk

This unit is part of the wider resource called 'Hā Ora', a Poutokomanawa project for Te Rito Toi. We encourage you to look through all the offerings presented in the wider 'Hā Ora' resource, and use the material in a way that suits your learning context. At this stage the material is presented in a mixture of te reo Māori and English, with a range of arts based activities to support learning in both mainstream and Māori immersion educational contexts.

## POUTOKOMANAWA for Te Rito Toi

**Poutokomanawa** is a bicultural collaboration that supports Māori voice, leadership and decision making in the growth and development of arts based pedagogy in New Zealand schools. The work aims to acknowledge and support those working in Māori immersion settings and to honour the expertise and pedagogical knowledge being developed in these contexts. Our collective advocates for learning that is grounded in: creativity, artistry, wellbeing, child-led exploration and play, the natural environment and local place-based curriculum.



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## RITUAL 1

# Mihi ki ngā Atua

Hā ki roto  
*in breath*

Hā ki waho  
*out breath*

Once the children become familiar with the movement, encourage them to create their own movements for each of the Atua.

Start the day (session) with a ritual using our breath to acknowledge the world around us as represented by the Atua (Gods). On the out breath, embody the qualities or movements of the Atua you are acknowledging [see video clip]:

1. Hā ki roto (**in breath**) Hā ki waho (**out breath**) x 3
2. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki a Ranginui** (Sky Father above)
3. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki a Papa tūā nuku** (Earth Mother below)
4. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki a Tangaroa** (Sea, coming in & going out)
5. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki a Tānemahuta** (Forest, insects, birds)
6. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki a Tāwhirimatea** (Winds)
7. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki a Rūaumoko** (Earthquakes & eruptions)
8. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki a Tū-matauenga** (War, conflict, people)
9. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki runga** (above)
10. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki raro** (below)
11. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki waho** (outward)
12. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki roto** (inwardly to your beautiful self)
13. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki ngā tupuna** (the ancestors)
14. Hā ki roto Hā ki waho: **Mihi ki a tātou katoa** (to everyone here)

Encourage the children to move freely when embodying the various Atua.

When children become familiar with the ritual, you can ask them to do it with their eyes closed, so there is less self-consciousness or judgment about what is the right or wrong way of moving, and also to embody the qualities at a deeper level.

Encourage the children to use their voice to vocalise the different qualities of the Atua and to move with a sense of being (rather than illustrating) the Atua. The teacher is the model for these interactions and the video will give an idea of how to move and use the voice and breath.

Encourage the children to breathe from their bellies and to balance energy and relaxation so that they're neither over energised or too relaxed.

The more you do this exercise with the children the more present they will become.

**Video clip 1:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CqQOr5zDie0>

**Video clip 2:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUQ46weNFYE>



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## RITUAL 2

# Walking with the Birds

## Presence

*The ability to be  
sensory alive in  
the moment*

Set out a trajectory (1–2 minutes walking time) in a natural environment, for example: a park, beach reserve, along a river or creek or lake, and so on.

Take your children to walk this trajectory bare-feet a number of times clock-wise and a number of times anti-clockwise. This exercise in Presence (= the ability to be sensory alive in the moment) is most effective when the walking surface has a variety of textures such as grass, wood, concrete, sand.

When walking the trajectory, it is important to have all senses available for stimulation, therefore: no headphones, gloves, beanies that cover ears, and so on.

Walk in a normal pace (not too fast, not too slow) and during the walking pay attention to all the sensations (sights, sounds, smells, touch, taste, intuition) that happen all around you (in front, behind, above, below, to your right, to your left, outside your body, as well as inside).

Afterwards, reflect on the experience by writing a short poem, making an oil pastel drawing or sharing some of the things you noticed.



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## RITUAL 3

# Six Directions

This exercise helps the children to develop their presence in all directions and provides stimulating opportunities for children to explore different qualities of doing the six directions.

### Examples of variations:

#### Working with intentions

To open, to close, to push, to pull, to embrace, to throw, and so on.

#### Working with feelings

With joy, timidly, with anger, with sadness, with shyness, and so on.

#### Working with imagery

As if floating, moulding, flying, radiating, as if a flower opening to the sun, etc.

Take your children through a movement sequence to connect with their environment using the six directions:

**Direction 1:** Ki te taha matau – *To the right*

**Direction 2:** Ki te taha maui – *To the left*

**Direction 3:** Ki mua – *Forwards*

**Direction 4:** Ki muri – *Backwards*

**Direction 5:** Ki runga – *Upwards*

**Direction 6:** Ki raro – *Downwards*

Start with all children facing the teacher. Teacher calls out: “**ki te taha matau**”.

The children move as far to the right as possible (whilst their left foot stays anchored on the spot), all children say the direction in a strong voice, as they are moving.

Once they reach the end of their physical ability going to the right, they imagine going even further, beyond the classroom or location where they do this exercise, beyond their neighbourhood, beyond their town or city, beyond their country, and so on.

Then there comes a moment when they need to return. The starting position and the return position in between each direction is a position in which to practice “the state of nothingness”. No longer returning from anywhere, not already going to the next direction, but just dwelling (being) in the “here and now”.

After awhile, the teacher will call out the next direction: “**ki te taha maui**”. The children follow this direction as they speak the direction they are going to in a strong voice.

At the end of their physical ability, they imagine going further. And so on: moving through all 6 directions, each time returning to the state of nothingness in between.

**Video clip 3:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bf0wJqndWvY>



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# Tāwhirimātea: Atua of the Winds

**Creative exploration of the various manifestations of Tāwhirimātea**

## Activity 1: Brainstorm

Brainstorm with the children around the different qualities and manifestations of the wind.

**For example:** gentle breeze (zephyr); hurricane; tornado; howling wind; crazy wind; cleansing winds; wind blasts; whispering wind; raging wind; crying wind; wind still.

## Activity 2: Images & Sounds

Find images that show different wind manifestations (photography; paintings; stills from movies).

Create 2 or 3 oil pastel impressions of different winds.

Find audio recordings of different wind and storm sounds.

In small groups: create a wind soundscape using voice and objects with a beginning, middle and end.

## Activity 3: Dance the Wind

Move freely in response to the sounds of various winds.

Move freely in response to different wind images.

Respond with free movement to the soundscapes created in Activity #2

## Activity 4: Six Directions

Perform the Six Directions embodying different winds:

- Like a gentle breeze
- Like a crazy whirlwind
- Like a howling wind
- As if blowing a feather
- As if moved by a string windblast

**Video clip 4:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4RHkgvqCO4M&feature=youtu.be>



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## Ngā hononga ki a *Papatūānuku* ki a *Tane Māhuta* (He Kanikani Harakeke)



Through a spoken echo-imitate process learn the words to the waiata '**Hutia Te Rito o te Harakeke**' ie. the teacher says each phrase and the children repeat it back. Then repeat the echo-imitate process, this time singing one phrase at a time.

Hutia te rito

*If you pluck out the centre shoot*

Hutia te rito o te harakeke

*If you pluck out the centre shoot of the flax,*

Kei hea te kōmako e kō?

*Where will the bellbird sing?*

Kī mai koe ki ahau

*If you were to ask me*

He aha te mea nui?

*What is the greatest thing*

He aha te mea nui i te Ao?

*What is the greatest thing in the world?*

Māku e kī atu

*I will reply*

He tāngata, he tāngata, he tāngata!

*It is people, it is people, it is people!*

Discuss the significance of this waiata with the tamariki. Talk about what the words of the waiata mean from their own perspectives. Talk about the rito as the child within the whānau, surrounded by the parents and the grandparents and show this in the harakeke bush.

Video clip 5: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UBiysjZvPGI>



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# Suggestions for Harakeke movements/dance

## Extra for experts:

Using moulding and flying – create movement to the waiata – Hutia te Rito o te Harakeke.

The song is sung by the group, so they decide the dynamics and pace of the waiata. They create the choreography to fit the dynamics and pace. The waiata and dance need to have at least one moment of stillness. View video clip 6.

**View the way harakeke moves in the wind. Try to see it moving in a gentle breeze through to a wild gusty wind. How does it look when it is still and wet?**

Work with the tamariki moving in different ways e.g. moulding - as if you were moving through mud. This type of movement is slow and deliberate. As we do it we become very aware of every part of our body as we move. It is as if we are resisting the movement as we do it.

Now contrast moulding with flying (moving as if you were a leaf in the wind). The movement is freer than moulding and has a quicker and more dynamic quality to it.

## Optional

Find some music to accompany your movement. Alternatively find the music and create the movement for the music. One suggestion is to find recorded taonga puoro sound or use taonga puoro to create a soundscape or low-tech instruments, such as stones, rākau, poi...

Once your group has created something you are happy with - practice, practice, practice until the movement becomes embodied.

**Video clip 6:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FJAdS8gNb7Y&feature=youtu.be>



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# About Rawiri and Bert



## Rawiri Hindle

Rawiri's teaching and research is situated in the context of investigating the role that arts education plays in deepening understanding of the intangible components of embodied knowing as it manifests as 'being.' The research is situated in Māori and indigenous perspectives that regards knowledge as a holistic mind, body, and soul phenomena. He has presented at national and international conferences and published with national and international scholars in an endeavour to transform current educational philosophy and pedagogy that focus on outcomes, economy and linear skill-based learning and pay little attention to the beings. As the National Coordinator Ngā Toi, Rawiri designed and implemented a MoE professional development contract based on the implementation of the Māori arts curriculum in Māori immersion schooling throughout New Zealand.

Rawiri has been a teacher in both English in Māori medium settings. Over the last 2 decades Rawiri has presented numerous Māori arts-based workshops to teachers and educators. He has worked for many years as a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer in the Māori Departments of the Faculty of Education of VUW and UOA, teaching and coaching many of the students in arts-based and culturally responsive pedagogies. He is a regular presenter and key-note speaker at TRCC workshops and at National and International Education based Conferences and Committee.



## Bert van Dijk

Bert has more than 30 years experience as a professional performing artist (dancer, actor, singer, director, choreographer) throughout Europe, UK, Australia, New Zealand, Pacific and SE Asia. He has won numerous awards, grants and raving reviews about his work as a performer and director. He has published 2 books: *Towards a New Pacific Theatre* (2011) & *Devised Theatre* (2016) and various articles on Place-based Performance, Intercultural Performance and Multi-disciplinary Performance. Artist-in-Residencies in Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia. Bert completed Theatre School in the Netherlands, holds a Professional Diploma in Corporeal Mime (London), M.A. Social & Clinical Psychology (University of Groningen) and a PhD in Theatre (VUW).

As a Social & Clinical Psychologist, Bert has 5 years of experience working in Youth Suicide Prevention through arts-based strategies (film & performing arts). He has taught at all the main Drama Schools and Universities in New Zealand and Australia. He directed several community-based performance projects, involving 60 – 70 participants varying in ages from 6 – 83 years of age and co-directed a place-based performance project with Rawiri Hindle. Currently, Bert is Senior Tutor Embodied Voice at Toi Whakaari: NZ Drama School. He has trained many of our successful actors and directors. For many years Bert has founded and conducted numerous world song choirs and ensembles.