

Rongoā Māori in Health and Physical Education

About this resource

This resource is designed to be used by kaiako interested in learning more about rongoā to include it in teaching and learning programmes.

In the Significant Learning for Level 1 Health Studies, rongoā is used as an example of Māori knowledge and practice that is related to hauora:

- **inquire into Māori knowledges and practices related to hauora, such as rongoā and maramataka.**

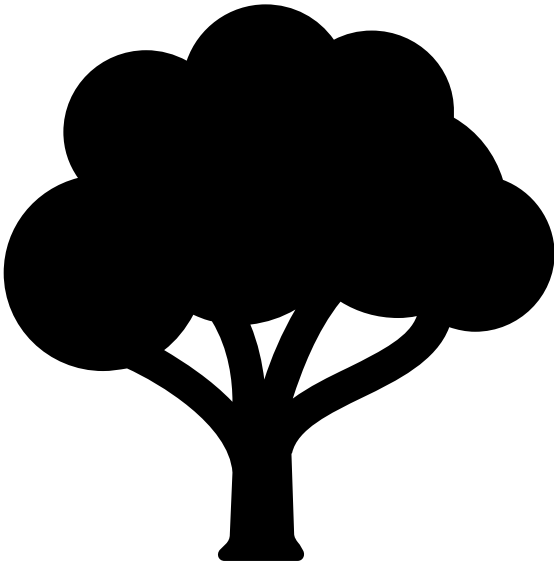
What is rongoā?

Rongoā is much more than a form of herbal medicine and ākonga will need to understand it from a Māori perspective.

This resource highlights some informative videos, gives discussion points, and recommends some readings to understand rongoā in more depth. At the end there are some ideas on how to link rongoā to the Key Areas of Learning for Level 1 Health Studies; Mental Health, Relationships and Sexuality, and Food and Nutrition.

It is important when inquiring into rongoā that ākonga do not ingest any products without parental permission.

Rongoā and traditional practices



In this video *Maurice Manawatu* takes a school group through the Kaikōura forest to explain traditional rongoā practices.

[Rongoā - Ngāi Tahu Mahinga Kai](#)

Discussion

Maurice Manawatu explained how we are interconnected with our forests. They fed us, nurtured us, and sheltered us. Now we need to look after our forests:

- Examine how the connection between people and te taiao relates to hauora.



Connection between whenua, people, and rongoā

In this video *Donna Kerridge* explains the connection between the whenua, the people, and rongoā.

[Rongoā i te ngahere - Healing in the forest | Auckland Council](#)

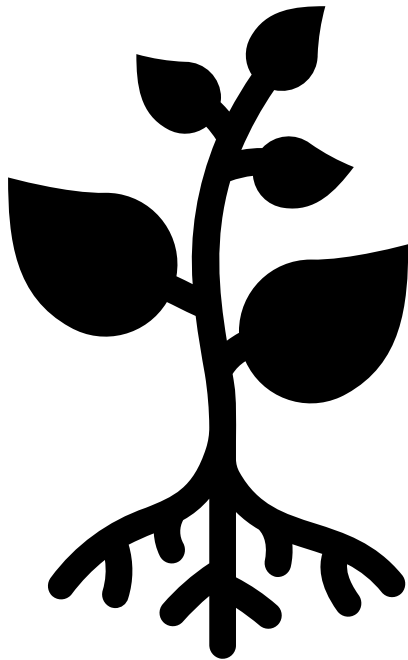


Discussion

Thinking about how Donna Kerridge explained how rongoā connects Māori people to the whenua and te taiao:

- discuss how mana and mauri link to hauora
- discuss what practices related to health and wellbeing existed for your tīpuna, tupuna, ancestors.

Unpacking rongoā



In this video *Rob McGowan* explains that rongoā is much more than the Western understanding of healing sickness. As Māori understand it is a way of being healthy rather than a way of healing.

[Rongoā and repo](#)

Discussion

Thinking about how *Rob McGowan* explained how rongoā is a way of being healthy rather than a way of healing:

- discuss how restoring people's wairua and a belief in themselves can heal loneliness, loss, and shame.

Te Pūtake - Whakauae Raro

This paper explores the definitions, meanings, practices, and processes of rongoā Māori with the aim of generating improved understanding of the breadth and depth of rongoā.

Rongoā is much more than mirimiri (massage) or pani (ointment) and there is a need to address misconceptions and misunderstandings of what rongoā Māori encompasses.

Rongoā Māori: more than mirimiri and pani

Local knowledge

Rongoā is not an alternative to Western medicine, it is about avoiding things going wrong.

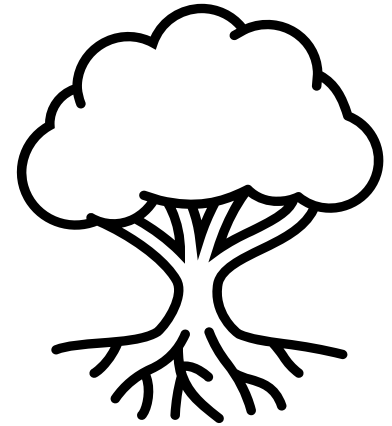
Here are some articles written by Donna Kerridge about rongoā

Who do you have within your local community that you could connect with to find out about it from a localised, iwi-specific perspective?

Connections

Go outside and spend some time looking at awa, roto, or ngahere.
What makes it healthy?

- Birdlife, insects, fish, plants, trees etc.
- What connections do they all have to each other to maintain the health of the awa, roto, or ngahere?



Discussion

All aspects of te taiao are connected to each other like an ecosystem, with each aspect being important.

Now spend some time considering what makes you healthy.

- List all the aspects that connect like an ecosystem in your life.
- What connections do they all have to each other to maintain your hauora?

Linking rongoā to three key areas of learning

Mental Health

How might people use rongoā to maintain mental health?

Consider how self-esteem, belonging, mana, and wairua relate to mental health.

How might mental health relate to te taiao and tūrangawaewae?

Discussion

Relationships and Sexuality

How might people use rongoā to support relationships?

Consider a range of different relationships, for example, whānau, friends, partners etc.

How might mental health relate to relationships?

Discussion

Food and Nutrition

How might people use knowledge of rongoā in relation to food practices?

Consider seasonal growing, tikanga, and connection to te taiao.

How might food practices relate to wairua and whenua?



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