

The strength of the bilingual experiment is 3DT form teacher, Mrs Dovey Taiaroa, who prepares subject units for each teacher to follow. Mrs Hine Taitoki, the 3DT physical education/health teacher, who is also Maori, fills in the Maori language gaps where necessary.

Greatest test

Mrs Taiaroa hopes that in two years' time the pupils will be bilingual.

That will put them in the fifth form, where the bilingual experiment will meet its greatest test, whether or not — with 17 subjects offered by the school for School Certificate — it can be maintained in the senior forms.

Mr Royal does not like to tie himself down to the numbers justification game, but it is quite clear that if pupils go their separate ways with too many different options, then it will not be feasible to continue to teach a handful of pupils certain subjects in both languages.

In preparation for this, pupils, teachers and parents will come together well in advance to discuss fifth form options and their likely effects on the bilingual programme.

Mr Royal is the first to admit that all languages require a home base to flourish properly. To try to achieve this the parents of the bilingual class pupils were invited to accompany their children and the 3DT teachers to Ngatokoaru Marae, Levin, for a weekend early in April.

Here the school was able to put bilingualism into more immediate perspective.

The visitors lived on the marae, learnt some elementary Maori protocol and discussed their expectations of the bilingual programme. For many, although Maori, the weekend represented their first time on a marae.

On the wall

Mr Royal says the visit was intended to support the parents and pupils in such a way that the language might be developed at home. Subject units will be sent home with pupils to "pin on the wall" so that the families can keep abreast of the progress and offer any suggestions which might further enhance the programme.

There is another good reason for hoping the experiment works.

At present, Wellington High, which represents 24 ethnic groups including a large percentage of Maori pupils, has no Maoris in the seventh form.

If bilingualism becomes the confidence booster that it is hoped, it may also serve as an added incentive to Maori pupils to see school through.

But anyone imagining that the programme is designed to benefit Maoris alone has only to look at the make-up of 3DT to see otherwise.

"I was booted all the way through school — that's what I call directive guidance."



3DT pupils Mark Callen (left) and James Ruiwhiu at work on a computer console watched by principal Turoa Royal.

Turoa Kiniwe Royal

In spite of his academic credentials, Turoa Kiniwe Royal, comes across best as a salesman with faith in his own commodity.

There is no hard sell in his approach. Just a dogged perseverance to turn the cliché 'a multicultural New Zealand' into reality, with biculturalism the first step.

If it sounds familiar, that's because the Race Relations Conciliator Hiwi Tauroa's "Race Against Time", says much the same. Mr Royal is ahead of the report, which among other things, wants the Government to establish bilingual schools by 1990.

Wellington High, the school he heads as principal, is offering bilingual education already and without state

funds.

Artfully dodging any personal credit, Mr Royal says the innovation is an example of a school meeting local needs within its own resources. No big deal really.

Important enough though, for pupils from 20kms away to bypass their local schools, so they can take part.

High's experiment is being trialed at