

Putting 'Te Kawa a Maui' (Maori Studies) on the Map

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The 'Te Kawa a Maui Atlas' is a project set up in 2010 to enhance the learning experiences of students in Te Kawa a Maui (the School of Maori Studies), Victoria University of Wellington (Mercier et al. 2013). We have introduced map-based group and individual assessment to ten Maori Studies courses. Student research in these courses has been collated and now contributes to a school-wide, publicly available Google Maps database of their work. Our motivation was to promote student engagement by involving them in a school-wide project, introducing a visual, place-based element to their learning, tasking them with projects of relevance to their local communities, and teaching skills in relevant mapping techniques, such as Google Earth, GPS and GIS.

One course includes practical, hands-on exercises that introduce students to maps, map projections and coordinate systems, and the concepts of accuracy and precision. Field-based tuition teaches how to set up a handheld GPS, and how to check that it is giving the right position. The students are taken through a project that requires them to download archaeological site data from an online data-base, check the data in the field, and where appropriate, to correct it. The data is then imported to Quantum GIS, processed, and exported to Google Earth for presentation. We comment on how students respond to these technologies, on the usefulness of the learning experiences to our students, and the potential for map-based assessment to be used more widely in cultural studies.

REFERENCES

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