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**Pathways to Literacy and Transitions to School:
Enabling incorporation and developing awareness of literacy**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of:

Doctor of Philosophy in Education

The University of Auckland

December 2006

Abstract

This study examines children's development and incorporation of literacy expertise across multiple sites and the transitions to school by four Māori preschool children, their whānau (families) and their teachers in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This study is embedded in a Kaupapa Māori framework of understanding and explaining teaching and learning processes across multiple sites of learning for children whose practices reflect ways of being and acting Māori. Descriptions of teaching and learning processes are also explained utilising a co-constructivist theoretical framework. These descriptions and explanations focus on the psychological processes of learning and development that children, whānau and teachers' engage in their practice.

A two phase case study design was employed that examines the teaching and learning processes of literacy across multiple sites. The first phase provides qualitative data that describes and explains how the different sorts of literacy and language activities are co-constructed by whānau and children. The ways by which literacy activities are constructed are inherent in parents ideas about teaching and learning reflected out of their diverse pedagogical practices. The distinct pedagogical practices also highlight the multiple pathways to learning that children developed and experienced in becoming an expert. This study also reported the influence of early educational settings as alternative and multiple contexts by which learning is organised and constructed. The different contexts provided families with specific ideas and practices about the teaching and learning process.

The second phase of the study provides descriptions of how children's literacy expertise was incorporated into classroom literacy and language activities. This phase of the study examines how teachers provided opportunities by which children's literacy expertise was incorporated into classroom activities. This study reported incidents where incorporation of children's level of literacy expertise was enhanced while other children's literacy expertise was discouraged in classroom activities. The significance of the reported differences of incorporation was provided from teacher's ideas and beliefs about children's literacy expertise upon entry to school. The study showed how teacher's ideas reflected the way that they organised and constructed literacy activities. Teacher's ideas also reflected their awareness of the diversity of children's literacy expertise. The earlier phase of this study examined the multiple ways and multiple contexts by which children

learn and develop literacy expertise. Incorporation of children's literacy expertise into classroom activities was determined by the degree to which teachers made connections that resonated children's expertise. This was also determined by teacher's instructional practices in the context of the classroom environment.

The implications of this study make important contributions to pedagogical practices for teachers in classroom environments. The descriptions and explanations reported in this study highlight the complexities of teaching and learning for children of diverse cultural and language communities.

Acknowledgements

This thesis is dedicated to my four children, Tanelle, Kharn, Callan and Victoria who have shared and endured this remarkable journey with me and to the memory of my parents, Nooroa Tamarua and Ngamako Pene Ashby. Your presence has continuously sustained my wairua. Te whānau whānui, thank you as always for being there when I needed your wisdom, guidance and support, ngā mihi arohanui ki a koutou katoa.

There are so many friends that I would also like to say thank you. In particular, heartfelt thanks to my supervisors, Professor Stuart McNaughton and Dr Margie Kahukura Hohepa who have been my mentors and 'kaitiaki' during the supervision of this thesis but also throughout my University career. Your guiding expertise and professional advice has always been encouraging and supportive. I am deeply indebted for your gracious generosity. Thanks go to; Professors Graham and Linda Smith and the Māori Education staff, at the University of Auckland who supported my University teaching and research career since 1990. It has been a privilege to have begun my University journey here and learning from the best Māori and non-Māori academics throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand. Ka nui te ihi, ki a koutou katoa.

There are so many other people for whom I am grateful. To Eve Coxen and colleagues of the Research Unit for Pacific Education (RUPE), at the University of Auckland. Thankyou Eve, for your continued support, the 'corridor' discussions and for providing me with a space to write, especially while completing this thesis. Thanks to Elaine McCulloch and the staff of the University of Auckland Crèche (during 1986 to 2000). To Cynthia, Pam, Dawn, Fiona, and Debbie and also to Janene from Banardos who took wonderful care of all my children. Thankyou, thankyou, thankyou!

Huge thanks go to the many friends and colleagues who have made this journey possible and bearable. I would especially like to thank my dearest friend, Margaret Kempton Smith, Kerry and their children Henry, Stella and 'baby' Eleanor who were brave enough to put up with me before, during and at the completion of this thesis. Your generous spirit and endless support will always be remembered.

A big thankyou to; Yvonne Rongo Culbreath and your two boys Sonny and James; to Linita Manu'atu, and colleagues of the Pasifika Educators Network group, (AUT); to

Mere Kepa and sister Kini; to Shelley McDonald and Pauline TeKare (WFRU). Thankyou to Ngahiiti Faulkner and te whānau o Te Roopu Akawhiri; Jane Bone, Desma Cornhill, Marlene Olguc, the teaching team from the MFLP programme (Sharon Alderson, Elisa AhLam, Faaolataga Misikopa) and colleagues from the School of Education: Te Kura Mātauranga, (AUT); to our kaumatua the late ‘Pop’ Davis, Tui O’Sullivan, Maaki Howard, Ngamaru Raerino and te whānau o Horotiu, (AUT). Thankyou to Bernadine Vester, Robin Houlker, Moana Whaanga and all the staff at COMET. Thankyou all for your constant companionship, hours of stimulating conversation and the moral support to keep one sane during such a journey. Tēnei te mihi, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa.

I would like to thank the following organisations for funding assistance received from; Fletcher Challenge Education Trust, the New Zealand Ministry of Education, the Research Unit for Maori Education (UOA), the Research Unit for Pacific Education (UOA), and the Woolf Fisher Research Unit (WFRU).

Finally a very special thank you to the children; Mary, Mark, Theresa and Hona, their whānau and their teachers who contributed and participated in this study. I thank you so very much with all my heart for allowing me to come into your homes and your classrooms, to share your kai and your passion for education and to share your stories. Your belief and confidence in the development and completion of this study made this journey a most rewarding and humbling experience. Tēnā koutou i a koutou manaakitanga mai, hei konā mai me te arohanui, ngā mihi nui ki a koutou katoa.

Matua, Tama, Wairua-Tapu, me ngā Anahera Pono, me Te Mangai hei tautoko aianae, ake nei, Āmine.

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