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**ASSESSMENT IN A  
PRE-SERVICE  
TEACHER EDUCATION  
PROGRAMME:  
THE RHETORIC AND THE PRACTICE**

**ELEANOR M. HAWE**

**VOLUME 1**

**ASSESSMENT IN A  
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THE RHETORIC AND THE PRACTICE**

**ELEANOR M. HAWE**

**A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Education,  
University of Auckland, 2000.**

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## Abstract

This study investigates how students, lecturers and others involved in a teacher education programme at a large metropolitan college of education experienced and interpreted assessment. To understand the actions and associated meanings of participants, the researcher worked 'in the field' (Burgess, 1984).

Fieldwork was conducted over a period of forty months while the researcher was employed as a lecturer at the college. In addition to being a full participant /opportunistic complete member (Adler & Adler, 1987, 1994; Riemer, 1977), the research roles of observer-participant and participant-observer (Adler & Adler, 1987, 1994) were assumed. Each role provided access to different sources of data. Prolonged engagement in the field generated a detailed, rich data base that reflected the everyday lived experiences of participants. Data gathering techniques centred on observation, informal listening, formal interviewing and the study of documentary evidence. Analysis and organisation of data were informed by the constant comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and analytic induction (Denzin, 1970). These processes resulted in the development of a number of conceptual categories and related properties (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) which represented the interpretations and understandings of participants.

Students were found to have expectations regarding the outcomes of assessment, they reacted emotionally to these outcomes and attributed both success and failure, in the main, to external factors (Weiner, 1985). Assessment was perceived by them as a highly subjective activity and they personalised the



assessment process. Game playing, negotiation of outcomes and cue seeking were common practice among the student population. Assessors also personalised the assessment process, using criteria and standards they considered important, to judge the student. Assessor personalisation was linked to a reluctance to award fail grades. Thus a marked disjuncture was apparent between the assessment rhetoric of the institution and both assessor practice and student behaviour. Two class based case studies provided additional insights into the meaning that assessment held for participants and highlighted the complex interrelationship between assessment, learning and teaching.



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