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**Creating Effective Invited Spaces: Putting the
lens on early childhood teacher education
practica**

**A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master of Education at Massey University, Manawatū,
New Zealand.**

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Abstract

The teaching practicum offers many opportunities for growth of knowledge, practice and development of new understandings and competencies for student teachers. However, student teachers who are placed within low socioeconomic early childhood settings, if they have little or no knowledge of this habitus, may find this a challenging aspect of their initial teacher education. This study aimed to identify factors that support, facilitate and nurture the positive relationships between associate teachers and student teachers during teaching practicum within low socioeconomic early childhood settings.

A qualitative case study approach was used to gather data, including in-depth interviews with two pre-service teacher education coordinators as well as six associate teachers in a range of low socioeconomic early childhood educational settings. The findings provide insights into associate teachers' pivotal role in allowing student teachers access to the very intimate and specific dispositions and approaches that they implement every day in their practice. In addition, the findings highlight the reciprocal responsibility of student teachers to take advantage of the opportunities to share with their associate teachers during the short passage of time that the teaching practicum allows.

The findings from this study led to the development of a conceptual model which reveals the characteristics of an effective 'invited space'. This invited space is most likely to emerge when both the associate teacher and the student teacher negotiate a respectful and trusting relationship that allows them to share their identity, beliefs, values and practices, and to be prepared to move flexibly between the roles of teacher and learner.

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Table of Contents

Abstract	i
Acknowledgements	iii
Te Wero – The Challenge	xiii
Chapter One Introduction	1
1.1. The Aim of the Study.....	2
1.2. The Rationale for the Study	3
1.3. Organisation of the Thesis	4
Chapter Two Literature Review	7
2.1. Introduction	7
2.2. Traditional Roles in Associate-Student Teacher Relationships.....	7
2.3. Invited Spaces	10
2.4. The Art of Active and Cultural Engagement.....	12
Active Engagement	13
Cultural Engagement	14
2.5. Effective Teaching Practices and Dispositions in Diverse Learning Settings	16
Ako	17
Funds of Knowledge.....	18
Co-Construction	19
2.6. Learning Through a Shared, Mutual Process	21
2.7. Summary	22
2.8. Research Questions	24
2.9. Theoretical Framework: Social constructivism	24
Chapter Three Methodology and Research Design	27
3.1. Introduction	27

3.2. The Qualitative Research Approach	27
3.3. Method/Approach: Case Study	28
3.4. Participants.....	29
3.5. The Setting of the Study	30
3.6. Ethical Considerations	30
3.7. Data Collection: Semi-structured Interviews	32
3.8. Data Analysis	32
3.9. Summary	33
Chapter Four Findings	35
4.1. Background: Pre-service Teacher Education Coordinators.....	35
Introduction	35
Identity and Challenging Entrenched Beliefs	35
A Willingness to be Open and Flexible.....	36
Cultural Intelligence and Understandings.....	37
Open, Trusting Relationships	38
Communication.....	38
Sustaining and Preserving Relationships.....	39
The Complexity of the Teaching Practicum.....	40
4.2. The Setting, Experience and Philosophy of each Associate Teacher	40
Introduction	41
Associate teacher 1 (Alice)	41
Associate teacher 2 (Valerie).....	42
Associate teacher 3 (Tania)	43
Associate teacher 4 (Shelley)	43
Associate teacher 5 (Adrien)	44
Associate teacher 6 (Cindy).....	45
4.3. Emerging Themes from the Associate Teachers	46
Knowing your Identity	46

Respect for Cultural Intelligence.....	47
Being Open on a Personal Level	47
Flexibility in the Teaching Space	48
Setting Expectations, Negotiation and Compromise.....	49
Showing Initiative	50
Trust, Respect and Confidentiality.....	50
Welcoming New Learning.....	51
Accepting Difference and Diverse Perspectives	52
Articulating Philosophy and Practice	55
Being a Responsible Mentor.....	55
4.4. Summary	56
Chapter Five Discussion	57
5.1. Introduction	57
5.2. How are Invited Spaces between Associate Teachers and Student Teachers Created and Negotiated?	58
Trust and Respect	58
Time	60
Working Through Expectations and Tensions	61
Taking Responsibility and Using Initiative	62
Creating a Climate of Dual Challenge	64
5.3. What are the Effective Associate Teacher Practices and Dispositions That Allow for Invited Spaces to Emerge?.....	65
The Ability to be Both the Teacher and the Learner (Ako).....	66
Being Open and Listening	67
Flexibility.....	69
5.4. How do Invited Spaces Promote Shared Understandings to Enhance Cultural Awareness and Contribute to Student Teacher Success during Practicum in Low Socioeconomic Early Childhood Educational Settings?	70

Valuing Identity and Beliefs.....	71
Sharing the Intimacies of the Setting.....	73
Articulating Practice	75
5.5. Reflecting on Links to Rogoff’s Planes.....	76
5.6. A Visual Metaphor for the Invited Space	78
5.7. Summary	80
Chapter Six Conclusion and Recommendations	82
6.1. Introduction.....	82
6.2. Key findings	83
6.3. Implications for Theory	83
6.4. Strengths of this Methodology/Research Design Approach	84
6.5. Limitations of this Methodology/Research Design Approach.....	86
6.6. Implications for Further Research.....	86
6.7. Implications for Practice.....	87
Recommendations for Associate Teachers	88
Recommendations for Student Teachers.....	89
Recommendations for Initial Teacher Education Providers.....	90
6.8. Concluding Reflection.....	90
References	93
Appendices	105

List of Figures

Figure 1: The Associate-Student Teacher Relationship.	26
Figure 2: The Invited Space.	79

List of Appendices

Appendix A: Ethical Approval	105
Appendix B: Consent Form – Individual	106
Appendix C: Consent Form – Institutional	107
Appendix D: Information Sheet - Practicum coordinators	108
Appendix E: Information Sheet - Associate Teachers	110
Appendix F: Interview Schedule - Practicum coordinators	112
Appendix G: Interview Schedule - Associate Teachers	114
Appendix H: Authority for the Release of Transcripts	117
Appendix I: Transcriber's Confidentiality Agreement	118

Kua takoto te mānuka, hiki ake, kawe!

The challenge is for associate teachers to pick up this knowledge, take it, and use these insights to nurture beginning teachers.

Associate teachers hold the power position and the key to creating transformative teaching practices. Utilising the mentor role with a willingness to share, and a view to creating a new genesis of teachers through a collaborative lens, is vital for the success of future teaching. Understanding and guiding our learners today will empower them to use this rich knowledge for navigating tomorrow's world.

Kia kaha, kia toa, kia maia, kia manawanui!