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Kei Roto I Te Tuakiri o Te Tangata Māori He Rongoā  
Hei Whakatutuki Mātauranga?  
*Formulating Māori Academic Success.*

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the degree of  
Masters of Education  
At Massey University, New Zealand.

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## DEDICATION

It is with a heavy heart that I dedicate this thesis to my late grandmother who passed away during my writing process. I have no doubts that you are proud beyond belief of what I have accomplished. This thesis is also dedicated to your new great grand moko, due September 2016. I love you and I miss you.

## ABSTRACT

There has been a long standing issue in mainstream schools throughout New Zealand in regards to Māori students underachieving academically. Numerous efforts have been made by The Ministry of Education over successive years to combat this problem. A series of strategies ensued focusing on supporting, adapting and improving various related areas of the education system in order to cater better to its Māori students learning needs.

This study sets out to explore the notion that there exists a prescription to Māori academic success. Not in a clinical sense but rather the unique characteristics, attributes and innate qualities found in successful Māori academics. It is anticipated that the revelation of certain attribute consistency will contribute to the overall outcomes of this study.

This study explored the experiences of Māori tertiary students, and the essential elements of their educational lives that are related to their success in mainstream education. The study focussed on what was and is currently working for academically successful Māori as a basis for new perspectives in regards to Māori academic success.

The study was underpinned by a contextualised theory of seven categories representing commonalities found within each of the participants that contributed to their educational experiences. Five of these categories were intangible, human qualities that each participant possessed while the remaining two categories were found to reside in their surrounding environments.

These results show that the foundations to a potential formula for Māori academic success can be found dwelling within the individuals who are undertaking a journey to find success in education.

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*He mihi nui tēnei ki a koutou katoa. Arohanui ki a koutou katoa mō ake tonu  
atu.*

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|    |   |           |
|----|---|-----------|
|    | DEDICATION  | i         |
|    | ABSTRACT  | ii        |
|    | ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS                                      | iii       |
|    | TABLE OF CONTENTS                                     | iv        |
|    | LIST OF FIGURES                                       | vi        |
| 1. | <b>CHAPTER ONE: Introduction</b>                      | <b>1</b>  |
|    | 1.1 <b>Outline</b>                                    | <b>3</b>  |
|    | 1.1.1 Purpose and Aim                                 | 3         |
|    | 1.1.2 Methods   | 4         |
|    | 1.2 <b>Chapter Organisation</b>                       | <b>5</b>  |
| 2. | <b>CHAPTER TWO: Literature Review</b>                 | <b>6</b>  |
|    | 2.1 <b>Background</b>                                 | <b>7</b>  |
|    | 2.1.1 • Traditional Māori Education                   | 7         |
|    | 2.1.2 • Colonisation                                  | 8         |
|    | 2.2 <b>Literature</b>                                 | <b>11</b> |
|    | 2.2.1 • Resistance of Dominant Hegemony               | 11        |
|    | 2.2.2 • Improvements to Mainstream Education          | 13        |
|    | 2.2.3 • Internal and External Barriers                | 15        |
|    | 2.3 <b>Theorising Māori Academic Success</b>          | <b>18</b> |
|    | 2.3.1 • Exceptions to Barriers                        | 18        |
|    | 2.3.2 • The Potential                                 | 21        |
| 3. | <b>CHAPTER THREE: Methods and Methodologies</b>       | <b>23</b> |
|    | 3.1 <b>Methodology Rationale</b>                      | <b>24</b> |
|    | 3.1.1 • Qualitative Methodology                       | 24        |
|    | 3.1.2 • Kaupapa Māori Methodology                     | 24        |
|    | 3.1.3 • Constructivist Grounded Theory                | 26        |
|    | 3.1.4 • Research Combination                          | 27        |
|    | 3.1.5 • Appropriateness                               | 28        |
|    | 3.1.6 • Paradigms                                     | 28        |
|    | 3.2 <b>Research Design Limitations and Weaknesses</b> | <b>29</b> |
|    | 3.3 <b>Ethical Considerations</b>                     | <b>31</b> |
|    | 3.3.1 • Ethical Principles                            | 31        |
|    | 3.3.2 • Consent and Confidentiality                   | 32        |
|    | 3.3.3 • Commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi          | 32        |
|    | 3.4 <b>Participant Selection</b>                      | <b>33</b> |
|    | 3.5 <b>Data Collection</b>                            | <b>34</b> |
|    | 3.5.1 • Individual Interview and Focus Group          | 34        |
|    | 3.6 <b>Data Analysis</b>                              | <b>36</b> |
|    | 3.6.1 • Processes                                     | 37        |
| 4. | <b>CHAPTER FOUR: Results</b>                          | <b>39</b> |
|    | 4.1 <b>Current Participants Narratives</b>            | <b>40</b> |
|    | 4.1.1 • Participant One                               | 40        |
|    | 4.1.2 • Participant Two                               | 41        |
|    | 4.2 <b>Past Participant Narratives</b>                | <b>42</b> |
|    | 4.2.1 • Participant Three                             | 42        |
|    | 4.2.2 • Participant Four                              | 43        |

|            |   |           |
|------------|---|-----------|
| 4.2.3      | • Participant Five                            | 45        |
| <b>4.3</b> | <b>Presentation of Analysed Findings</b>      | <b>46</b> |
| 4.3.1      | • Responsible                                 | 47        |
| 4.3.2      | • Industrious                                 | 49        |
| 4.3.3      | • Incessant                                   | 50        |
| 4.3.4      | • Conscious                                   | 52        |
| 4.3.5      | • Ambitious                                   | 53        |
| 3.3.6      | • Genuine Support                             | 55        |
| 4.3.7      | • Responsibility                              | 57        |
| 4.3.8      | • Further Findings                            | 59        |
| 5.         | <b>CHAPTER FIVE: Discussion</b>               | <b>61</b> |
| 5.1        | <b>Interpretation</b>                         | <b>61</b> |
| 5.1.1      | • External Factors                            | 62        |
| 5.1.2      | • Internal Attributes                         | 63        |
| 5.2        | <b>Contribution</b>                           | <b>67</b> |
| 5.2.1      | • Focus of Current Literature                 | 67        |
| 5.2.2      | • Target Areas                                | 68        |
| 5.2.3      | • Recognition of Similar Studies              | 69        |
| 5.2.4      | • The Similarities and Differences            | 71        |
| 5.2.5      | • This Study                                  | 72        |
| 5.2.6      | • Limitations                                 | 74        |
| 6.         | <b>CHAPTER SIX: Conclusion</b>                | <b>76</b> |
| 6.1        | <b>Closing Statements</b>                     | <b>76</b> |
| 6.1.1      | Theory and Findings                           | 77        |
| 6.1.2      | Recommendations                               | 79        |
|            | <b>REFERENCES</b>                             | <b>81</b> |
|            | APPENDIX A: Information Sheet                 | 87        |
|            | APPENDIX B: Individual Interview Consent Form | 90        |
|            | APPENDIX C: Focus Group Consent form          | 91        |
|            | APPENDIX D: Confidentiality Agreement         | 92        |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Figure one:</b> Concept one: Internal Attributes | 47 |
| <b>Figure two:</b> Concept two: External Factors    | 55 |
| <b>Figure three:</b> Theoretical Model              | 73 |