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MAORITANGA

A STUDY OF TEACHER SENSITIVITY

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the  
requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts  
at Massey University.

by

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My task in writing this thesis has been greatly assisted by a number of people. Thanks are due to Dr Douglas Bray who both supervised and indirectly inspired this work. His assistance and insistence at appropriate moments has been appreciated.

Thanks are extended to the District Senior Inspectors of the Taranaki and Hawke's Bay Education Board Districts and the Principals of schools involved, for their ready co-operation. Also my thanks to all those who completed Questionnaires.

To Richard Bates who gave his time and expertise when it was badly needed, a special thanks. Many other people including the staff of the New Plymouth Public Library assisted in one way or another and this assistance was appreciated.

Finally my thanks are due to Mrs Clare Wrathall who has so capably and cheerfully typed this manuscript.

## ABSTRACT

ii.

For many years it has been recognised, both by official and unofficial sources, that as a group, Maori children do less well in school than Pakeha children. The major explanations for this have usually involved reference to lower socio-economic status or linguistic variables. While not denying that these variables are important, this study has attempted to place much greater emphasis on variables related to the discontinuity between the teachers' background and the sub-cultural and minority group status of their Maori pupils.

Ranginui Walker's statement that teachers are predominantly monocultural and not sensitised to react to biculturalism or the minority group needs of Maori pupils, was taken as a hypothesis.

A Questionnaire was designed and circulated amongst groups of Pakeha teachers and psychologists. A group of Maoris was also selected to complete part of this Questionnaire. The results suggest that by and large Pakeha teachers seek few experiences which would lead them to a greater understanding of the "Maori side" of their Maori pupils' lives. Furthermore they appear to have a poor knowledge of Maoritanga. This conclusion was found to be true of teachers in areas where there was a relatively high percentage of Maori pupils, as well as their counterparts in areas where relatively few Maori pupils are on school rolls.



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