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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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				61
			1	4
		2.2.0		
TABLE	0F	CONTENTS		

	Fage
Acknowledgements	i
Abstract	ii
List of Tables	iii
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION	1
	1000
CHAPTER 2 - CULTURE, SOCIALIZATION AND REALITY	24
Culture	4
Social Interaction	5
Sub-culture	7
Socialization	8
Subjective Reality	12
Inconsistencies in Reality Confirmations	13
Reality Maintenance	15
Ocultos	16
Culture Shock	17
Summary	19
CHAPTER 3 - MAORI SUB-CULTURAL IDENTITY	20
Maori Identity Doubted	20
Maoritanga Defined	21
Existence of Maoritanga Affirmed	23
Maoritanga in Urban Settings	25
Children Learn What They Live	26
A Renaissance?	26
Minority Group Status	27
Summary	28

CHAPTER 4 - RACIAL ATTITUDES AND UNDERSTANDINGS	
IN NEW ZEALAND : PAKEHA TO MAORI	30
Racial Prejudice	30
Ignorance and Indifference	31
Brown-Skinned Pakehas	33
Ocultos	35
Knowledge Sacred?	36
Summary	40
CHAPTER 5 - TEACHER SENSITIVITY TO BICULTURALISM -	
BENEFITS AND IMPLICATIONS	41
Need for Sensitivity	41
Benefits of Sensitivity	42
Official and Semi-Official Views	49
Commission on Education (1962)	49
New Zealand Educational Institute	
Report (1967)	51
National Advisory Committee (1970)	52
Education Department Publication (1971)	52
Educational Development Conference	
Report (1975)	54
Need for Re-socialization of Teachers	56
Organized Experiences Needed	57
Responsibilities of Officials	59
Summary .	61
CHAPTER 6 - SURVEY DESIGN	62
Hypothesis	62
Sample groups	63

5

Taranaki Maori Sample67Hawke's Bay Sample67Psychologist Sample68Questionnaire69Lie Scale7Marking Standards - Section 671Administration Procedure71Summary71CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF76RESULTS76Sections 2 and 380Section 492Section 5 - Fiction91- Reports92- Educational and Socio-93- Journals100- Other References100- Reason for Reading100Section 6100Hawke's Bay Sample11Section 1492Section 2 and 3111Section 6100	CHAP	TER 6 (Cont.)	
Hawke's Bay Sample 65 Psychologist Sample 66 Questionnaire 65 Lie Scale 7 Marking Standards - Section 6 73 Administration Procedure 79 Summary 77 CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 76 Taranaki Sample 76 Sections 2 and 3 80 Section 5 - Fiction 97 - Reports 99 - Educational and Socio- logical References 107 - Journals 109 - Other References 107 - Reason for Reading 106 Section 6 106 Hawke's Bay Sample 113 Section 2 and 3 119 Section 2 and 3 119 Section 4 22	•	Taranaki Teacher Sample	64
Psychologist Sample66Questionnaire69Lie Scale71Marking Standards - Section 672Administration Procedure71Summary71CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF74RESULTS74Sections 2 and 380Section 493Section 5 - Fiction93- Reports93- Educational and Socio-10gical References10gical References103- Other References103- Region for Reading103Section 6103Hawke's Bay Sample113Section 422		Taranaki Maori Sample	67
Questionnaire69Lie Scale7Marking Standards - Section 673Administration Procedure75Summary75CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF76RESULTS76Tarenaki Sample75Sections 2 and 380Section 493Section 5 - Fiction95- Reports95- Educational and Socio-10gical References10gical References105- Other References105- Regon for Reading106Hawke's Bay Sample11Section 422Section 412		Hawke's Bay Sample	67
Lie Scale 7 Marking Standards - Section 6 Administration Procedure 7 Summary 7 CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 76 Taranaki Sample 76 Sections 2 and 3 Section 4 92 Section 5 - Fiction 97 - Reports 99 - Educational and Socio- logical References 100 - Journals 109 - Other References 100 - Reason for Reading 106 Section 6 106 Hawke's Bay Sample 11 Sections 2 and 3 119 Section 4 22		Psychologist Sample	68
Marking Standards - Section 6 Administration Procedure Summary CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS Taranaki Sample Sections 2 and 3 Section 4 Section 5 - Fiction - Reports - Educational and Socio- logical References - Journals - Other References - Reason for Reading Section 6 Hawke's Bay Sample 11 Section 4 22 23 24 24 25 25 26 27 26 27 26 27 26 27 26 27 27 27 27 27 27 27 27 27 27		Questionnaire	69
Administration Procedure 79 Summary 77 CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 76 Taranaki Sample 76 Sections 2 and 3 80 Section 4 92 Section 4 92 Section 5 - Fiction 97 - Reports 99 - Educational and Socio- logical References 107 - Journals 109 - Other References 107 - Reeson for Reading 108 Section 6 108 Hawke's Bay Sample 11 Sections 2 and 3 119 Section 4 127		Lie Scale	71
Summary 7 CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 74 Tarenaki Sample 75 Sections 2 and 3 80 Section 4 92 Section 4 92 Section 5 - Fiction 97 - Reports 99 - Educational and Socio- logical References 107 - Journals 109 - Other References 107 - Reason for Reading 106 Section 6 106 Hawke's Bay Sample 11 Sections 2 and 3 119 Section 4 127		Marking Standards - Section 6	73
CHAPTER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS 74 Taranaki Sample 75 Sections 2 and 3 80 Section 4 92 Section 5 - Fiction 97 - Reports 99 - Educational and Socio- logical References 109 - Journals 109 - Other References 109 - Other References 109 - Reason for Reading 100 Section 6 108 Hawke's Bay Sample 112 Sections 2 and 3 119 Section 4 129	19	Administration Procedure	75
RESULTS76Taranaki Sample76Sections 2 and 380Section 492Section 5 - Fiction92- Reports92- Educational and Socio-92- Educational and Socio-10- Journals109- Other References109- Regon for Reading108Section 6108Hawke's Bay Sample11Section 412		Summary	77
RESULTS76Taranaki Sample76Sections 2 and 380Section 492Section 5 - Fiction92- Reports92- Educational and Socio-92- Educational and Socio-10- Journals109- Other References109- Regon for Reading108Section 6108Hawke's Bay Sample11Section 412			
Taranaki Sample75Sections 2 and 380Section 492Section 5 - Fiction91- Reports92- Educational and Socio- logical References101- Journals102- Other References101- Reason for Reading108Section 6108Hawke's Bay Sample111Section 2 and 3111Section 412	CHAP	TER 7 - ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF	
Sections 2 and 3 Section 4 Section 5 - Fiction - Reports 99 - Educational and Socio- logical References 109 - Journals 000 - Other References 100 - Reason for Reading 100 Section 6 Hawke's Bay Sample Sections 2 and 3 Section 4 12		RESULTS .	78
Section 4 Section 5 - Fiction - Reports 92 - Educational and Socio- logical References 102 - Journals 103 - Other References 103 - Other References 104 - Reason for Reading Section 6 Hawke's Bay Sample Sections 2 and 3 Section 4 125		Taranaki Sample	78
Section 5 - Fiction 97 - Reports 99 - Educational and Socio- logical References 10 - Journals 109 - Other References 107 - Other References 107 - Reason for Reading 108 Section 6 108 Hawke's Bay Sample 112 Sections 2 and 3 119 Section 4 125		Sections 2 and 3	80
<ul> <li>Reports</li> <li>Educational and Socio- logical References</li> <li>Journals</li> <li>Other References</li> <li>Reason for Reading</li> <li>Section 6</li> <li>Hawke's Bay Sample</li> <li>Sections 2 and 3</li> <li>Section 4</li> </ul>		Section 4	92
- Educational and Socio- logical References 10 - Journals 109 - Other References 107 - Reason for Reading 108 Section 6 108 Hawke's Bay Sample 11 Sections 2 and 3 119 Section 4 12		Section 5 - Fiction	97
logical References 10 - Journals 105 - Other References 107 - Reason for Reading 108 Section 6 108 Hawke's Bay Sample 115 Sections 2 and 3 115 Section 4 125		- Reports	99
- Journals 105 - Other References 107 - Reason for Reading 108 Section 6 108 Hawke's Bay Sample 112 Sections 2 and 3 112 Section 4 125		- Educational and Socio-	
- Other References 10 - Reason for Reading 108 Section 6 108 Hawke's Bay Sample 11 Sections 2 and 3 11 Section 4 12		logical References	101
- Reason for Reading 108 Section 6 108 Hawke's Bay Sample 11 Sections 2 and 3 11 Section 4 12		- Journals	105
Section 6 108 Hawke's Bay Sample 11 Sections 2 and 3 11 Section 4 12		- Other References	107
Hawke's Bay Sample 11. Sections 2 and 3 11. Section 4 12		- Reason for Reading	108
Sections 2 and 3 11 Section 4 12		Section 6	108
Section 4 12		Hawke's Bay Sample	113
		Sections 2 and 3	115
Section 5 - Fiction 12		Section 4	121
		Section 5 - Fiction	124

- Reports

124

CHAPTER 7 (Cont.)

- Educational and Socio-	
logical References	127
- Journals	127
- Other References	131
- Reason for Reading	132
Section 6	132
Psychologist Sample	137
Sections 2 and 3	137
Section 4	142
Section 5 - Fiction	144
- Reports	146
- Educational and Socio-	
logical References	146
- Journals	149
Section 6	149
Summary	153
CHAPTER 8 - CONCLUDING STATEMENT	154
APPENDIX A - THE QUESTIONNAIRE	158
BIBLIOGRAPHY	168

## 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

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.

ii.

#### LIST OF TABLES

### Table

- School Rolls (1/7/75), Number of Teachers and Percentage Response to Questionnaire for the Taranaki Sample Schools
- School Rolls (23/4/76), Number of Teachers and Percentage Response to Questionnaire for the Hawke's Bay Sample Schools
- 3. University Successes of Teachers in the Taranaki Sample. (Figures represent percentages of each sample group.)
  - 4. Summary of Taranaki Respondents' Answers to Question 7, Section 1. Special Experiences Which Have Helped Respondents Understand Maori Pupils Better.
  - Summary of Answers to Section 2. Taranaki
     Teacher Sample and Taranaki Maori Sample.
     81
  - Summary of Answers to Section 3. Taranaki
     Teacher Sample and Taranaki Maori Sample.
     88
  - 7. Estimated Number of In-Service Training Days Spent on Maori Education During the Last Five Years. Taranaki Teacher Sample.

66

68

78

79

94

	*	
8.	Opinions on Most Crucial Issue Facing Maori	
÷ .	Children in Schools. Taranaki Teacher Sample.	96
9.	Fiction, Reading Completed by Taranaki Teacher	
	Sample.	98
10.	Reports. Reading Completed by Taranaki Teacher	
, р.,	Sample.	100
· · ·		
11.	Educational and Sociological References.	
	Reading Completed by Taranaki Teacher Sample.	102
12.	Percentage of Total Possible Reading Completed	
	by Taranaki Teacher Sample.	105
.13.	Journals. Reading Completed by Taranaki Teacher	
٠	Sample.	106
14.	Section 6. Percentage of Taranaki Teacher	
	Sample Credited with the Correct Answer for	
	Each Item.	109
15.	Section 6. Percentage of Taranaki Teacher	
	Sample Obtaining Specific Raw Scores.	111
16.	University Successes of Teachers in the	
	Hawke's Bay Sample.	113

iv.

•

Sunmary of Hawke's Bay Respondents' Answers to 17. Question 7, Section 1. Special Experiences Which Have Helped Respondents Understand Maori Pupils Better. 114 18. Summary of Answers to Section 2. Hawke's Bay Teachers. 117 Summary of Answers to Section 3. Hawke's Bay 19. Teachers. 118 20. Estimated Number of In-Service Training Days Spent on Maori Education During the Last Five Years. Hawke's Bay Sample. 122 Hawke's Bay Sample. Opinions on What is the 21. Most Crucial Issue Facing Maori Children in School. 123 Fiction. Reading Completed by Hawke's Bay Sample. 125 22. Reports. Reading Completed by Hawke's Bay Sample. 126 23. 24. Educational and Sociological References. Reading Completed by Hawke's Bay Teacher Sample. 128 Journals. Reading Completed by Hawke's Bay 25. Teacher Sample. 130

v.

	26.	Percentage of Total Possible Reading Completed	
		by Hawke's Bay Teacher Sample.	131
	190		
	27.	Section 6. Percentage of Hawke's Bay Teacher	
		Sample Credited with the Correct Answer for	
		Each Item.	133
	28.	Section 6. Percentage of Hawke's Bay Teacher	
		Sample Obtaining Specific Raw Scores.	134
	29.	Summary of Psychologists' Answers to Question 7,	
		Section 1. Special Experiences Which Have	
		Helped Respondents Understand Maori Pupils Better.	137
	алан А.,		
	30.	Summary of Answers to Section 2. Psychologists	
		Sample.	139
	( <b>1</b> )		
	30a.	Directional Indices of Other Sample Groups.	
		Section 2.	139
	31.	Summary of Answers to Section 3, Psychologists	
		Sample.	141
	31a.	Directional Indices of Other Sample Groups.	
	· · · · ·	Section 3.	141
	8		
	32.	Estimated Number of In-Service Training Days	
(a)	12	Spent on Maori Education During the Last Five	
		Years. Psychologists Sample.	143

vi.

Psychologists Sample. Opinion on What is the 33. Most Crucial Issue Facing Maori Children in Schools. 144 34. Fiction. Reading Completed by Psychologists Sample. 145 35. Reports. Reading Completed by Psychologists Sample. " 147 36. Educational and Sociological References. Reading Completed by Psychologists Sample. 148 37. Journals. Reading Completed by Psychologists Sample. 149 38. Section 6. Percentage of Psychologists Sample Credited with the Correct Answers for Each Item. 151 39. Section 6. Percentage of Psychologists Sample Obtaining Specific Raw Scores. 152

vii.