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**Investigating the Social Validity of an Early Literacy Assessment Tool in New
Zealand Classrooms**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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ABSTRACT

There is vast evidence that emergent literacy skills provide the foundation for reading success. Print concept knowledge and listening comprehension are two emergent literacy skills that make important contributions to reading and can be developed in early childhood. However, some children may start school without the necessary knowledge to succeed with formal literacy instruction and will be at-risk for underachievement. Appropriate assessment and subsequent support can produce positive outcomes for these children, however, there are currently few tools dedicated to assessing print concept knowledge and listening comprehension in the early stages of schooling. The current research involved the development of an assessment tool that assessed these skill areas. Four Year 0-1 teachers in New Zealand then trialled the tool with children who they perceived may need additional literacy support. Interviews were conducted to seek teacher perceptions about the tool's social validity. Findings suggest this tool could be an effective resource for teachers who prefer authentic assessment and it has the potential to provide valuable information about a child's understanding of print concept knowledge and listening comprehension abilities to inform teacher planning. Future directions for related research are discussed including the recommendation for a larger scale study seeking feedback from a greater number of teachers in New Zealand.