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MASSEY UNIVERSITY
ALBANY

Whaia te iti Kahurangi
Contemporary Perspectives of Māori Women Educators

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Abstract

This thesis is concerned with the experiences of six Māori women educators who are currently working in educational organisations. The study explores significant themes that arise from the women's experiences situated within three specific sites - the home-place, the school and the work-place. A life history approach using oral narratives is used to examine the reality of the women's lives growing up, being educated and working in the dual worlds of te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā. The women's narratives are grounded in a Māori world-view and a theoretical perspective which draws heavily on a Māori philosophical tradition. The women's voices record how their sense of identity was conceived and understood, what their familial relations were growing up in rural and suburban settings and who were the strong models of womanhood that influenced them. It explores the women's educational experiences within particular schooling sites. A historical perspective of schooling for Māori women and girls provides a context for analysis.

The women's workplace experiences, focuses on the nature of their experiences and those influences that affected the direction of their careers as educators and the multiple realities of working in various sites of the educational work-place. It explores the multiple tensions that underpin the experiences of the women as they contest, create and capture space for mana wahine Māori in the educational workplace. It looks at people, places and events that have significantly influenced them and shaped them as Māori, as women and as educators. This study places women as active agents of change who recognise the barriers that confront them but refuse to be limited by them. Above all the study reflects the complexity of their existence within dual worlds of te ao Māori and te ao Pākehā.

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