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***Important Messages from Students' Responsive
Writing: "...a big holloboleoo"***

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Abstract

This thesis explores responsive written feedback as a means of mediating the written language of six to eight year olds, including students traditionally minoritised within mainstream New Zealand classrooms because of cultural and/or language differences. This research aimed to develop understandings about the effect responsive writing has on all of the students who participated, including those students whose second language was English.

A review of the literature identified the importance of socio-cultural contexts for mediating students' learning, including a specific examination of responsive written feedback and its effects on students' written language in English and in Māori medium settings. Chapter two presents the mixed methods approach utilised in this research, which involves a retrospective look at two different responsive writing studies. In chapters three and four, the results from these two studies are presented in terms of how effectively the responsive writing was undertaken by the responders and the extent to which the responsive writing strategy mediated both the quality and quantity of writing for the students who participated, including students whose second language was English. These results suggest a very positive impact from mediating the learning of all students, including second language learners, within the context of responsive written feedback. The thesis concludes with implications for other teachers, from the existing students' outcome data and participants' interviews.

Acknowledgements

I have written this thesis in the hope that our experience with responsive written feedback will be of some use for other teachers who like me, find themselves educating students from cultures other than that of their own and wish to become more culturally responsive to them, essentially, becoming more effective teachers for these students. There are many people who I would like to acknowledge and thank for their support and commitment in guiding me through this thesis.

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I trust that in the future, our child may benefit from teachers who have built on the findings from my study, in order to be more culturally responsive for children whose language or culture may differ from that of their own.

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Introduction

This thesis attempts to explore responsive written feedback as a means to mediate the written language of six to eight year old students traditionally minoritised within mainstream New Zealand classrooms because of cultural and/or language differences. This research undertaken proposed to develop understandings to the following four research questions:

1. What does the literature tell us about effective responses for students within mainstream New Zealand classrooms who have been minoritised because of cultural and/or language differences?
2. How effectively did the responders in the two projects undertaken within my own classroom, implement the responsive writing strategies?
3. What effect did the responsive writing have on all participating students?
4. What effect did the responsive writing have on participating students whose second language was English?

In chapter one a review of literature identifies some of the implications of mainstream education on students with different cultural experiences and/or languages and explores the importance of engaging with and collaborating with these communities more effectively. An examination is also made of the importance of socio-cultural contexts for mediating students' learning including a specific look at responsive written feedback and its effects on written language. Chapter two presents the mixed methods approach utilised in this research which involves a retrospective look at two responsive writing studies. In chapters three and four, the results from these studies are presented in terms of how effectively the responsive writing was undertaken by the responders and the extent to which the responsive writing strategy has mediated both the quality and quantity of writing for the students who participated, including students whose second language was English. In chapter five, implications from the existing student data and responder and student interviews are drawn together in order to make some recommendations about the impact of socio-cultural contexts for mediating the learning of second language learners within the context of responsive written feedback. Finally the implications of these recommendations for other writers are presented in the conclusion.

Chapter 1: Review of Related Literature

Introduction

Chapter one identifies the implications of mainstream education in New Zealand on students who come with different cultural experiences and/or languages. This literature also explores the importance of engaging with and collaborating more effectively with the communities of these students. This chapter includes a discussion of the importance of socio-cultural contexts for mediating students' literacy learning, specifically focussing on the pedagogy of responsive written feedback and how it may be used to improve the amount and quality of minoritised students' expressive writing.

The Achievement of Minoritised Students in New Zealand Schools

This section focuses first on the history of New Zealand in terms of the implications of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi between the indigenous Māori leaders on behalf of their sub-tribes and representatives of the British crown on February 6, 1840 (Orange, 1987). This Treaty promised Māori full participation in government, full protection over their cultural and physical resources within an operational partnership between Māori and the British colonials. It was also intended to be a guide for the future development of New Zealand. In return, British people were allowed the right to settle in New Zealand and the right to govern. However, since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, successive governments have sought to assimilate Māori into all domains of what quickly became the dominant colonial culture. This has been so pervasive that the Māori people have been marginalised and made to feel inferior, with their own language and culture subordinated within that of the coloniser (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999). Amongst others, Consedine and Consedine (2005) and Bishop and Glynn (1999) explain the severity of such assimilatory policies and practices in New Zealand not only in education, but in all other areas of economic and social development. Bishop and Glynn (1999) suggest that,

[t]he development of New Zealand since the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, despite continual armed and passive resistance by Māori people, has been one where the Pakeha majority has benefited enormously and where Māori have been politically marginalised, culturally and racially attacked, and economically impoverished within their own country (pp.14-15).

In Shields, Bishop and Mazawi (2005), Bishop contends that Māori people were rapidly encouraged to abandon their language and culture, in order to learn the epistemology of the dominant culture. Shields and Mazawi contend that this has also been the case of other colonised indigenous peoples. Shields speaks of the plight of the Navaho, while Mazawi discusses that of the Bedouin. In New Zealand, the natural consequence of this has been a continual growth of deficit thinking, emphasising the perceived negative features of Māori language and culture, with Māori being blamed for their own short-comings. The acquisition of the dominant language, knowledge and beliefs reigned superior as English language skills became more highly valued as a means of communicating, retaining and transferring knowledge (Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2008). The implications of this continue to impact on students from minoritised cultures in our mainstream education system today, where the colonial mainstream language and discourses still dominate.

Sheurich and Young (1997) suggest that when one ethnic/cultural group in society is seen to be worse off than all other groups across a wide range of indices such as poor health, early rates of mortality, most incarcerated and lowest education qualifications, then that country may well be practising what they term *institutional racism*. This is the case of Māori in New Zealand. Māori are over represented in a wide range of negative statistics such as failing to achieve formal qualifications at school, higher unemployment, health and housing problems, crime and other core anti-social areas of society, and yet they are under represented in the self determination of language and culture as *guaranteed* to them by the Treaty of Waitangi, in terms of participation, protection and partnership (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999). In addition to this, statistically, Māori students experience higher rates of absenteeism, stand downs and expulsions from schools. For example, as of June 2008, the unemployment rate of Māori people aged 15 and over (who were also not enrolled in any form of education), was 7.7%. This is compared to the unemployment rate of non-Māori which was 3.9%. www.dol.govt.nz).

The New Zealand government has attempted to meet the education and welfare needs of Māori people with policies and strategies that have included biculturalism, integration, multiculturalism (Jones, McCulloch, Marshall, Smith, & Tuhiwai-Smith,

1990), along with programmes such as *Taha Māori* (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999; Smith, 1990). Bishop and Glynn claim that whilst this may not have been the intention of the New Zealand government, initiatives such as these have maintained pressure on Māori to subjugate their own identity and destiny to the Nation's objectives. Smith (1997) argues whether the New Zealand government is capable of ever being able to meet the needs of Māori, as to do this would entail having to work *with* Māori to reach their own destiny, *for* Māori. That is to allow Māori to be self determining. As cited in Bishop and Glynn (1999),

What is at issue here is whether the dominant Pakeha education system in general and schooling in particular will ever be able to provide a mode of education which can free itself of its historical colonising baggage and genuinely meet Māori students' needs and aspirations (Smith, 1997, p.253).

Similarly, Berryman (2008) and Bishop and Glynn (1999) discuss the need for changes within the New Zealand education system, in order to meet the needs of Māori and other minority cultures such as Pasifika peoples. They suggest a need to construct more metaphoric spaces where people from indigenous and other minority cultural backgrounds can feel safe to bring their own prior knowledge and experiences with them to school, in order to more effectively relate to, interact with, and to learn with and from each other (Berryman, 2008). Bishop and Glynn (1999) consider that only then, will the Māori language and culture begin to be termed valid, normal and legitimate.

Such complex issues as power-struggles in education, where the majority culture dominates that of the minority, have resulted in a demand from Māori people themselves for access to successful learning opportunities for Māori. This has led to initiatives designed *for* Māori *by* Māori, as an overall means of reclaiming the Treaty's promise of power and control over their own destiny (*tino rangatiratanga*) and are expected to continue. Perhaps the most public stance has been that of *Kōhanga Reo* (early childhood Māori immersion settings) and *Kura Kaupapa Māori* (Māori immersion primary schools). Both of these education initiatives have seen Māori take a step away from the mainstream in order to be self determining.

Karen Sewell, the chief executive officer for the Ministry of Education in New Zealand, provides links to Ka Hikitia, the Māori education strategy, by highlighting how all students need access to high quality education as well as Māori language education that provides positive language and learning outcomes (Ministry of Education, 2008). Sewell adds that it is the responsibility of educators to do this and to make a difference for Māori students.

The Achievement of Minoritised students in New Zealand schools: Māori Students

Another such initiative within mainstream education is an ongoing project entitled *Te Kotahitanga* (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003), in which researchers attempted to step into the minds of young Māori students (year 9 and 10) to learn how school can become a more positive and successful learning institution for them. Researchers also spoke to the parents of these students in order to gain an understanding of what the parents, as well as the students, considered would be effective teaching. This research was carried out within a kaupapa Māori framework in which a pattern of sequential in-depth, semi-structured interviews as *conversations* were carried out to result in collaborative storying, a process that involves what Bishop (1996) terms *spiral discourse*. The professional development programme resulting from this research provides a means of working with teachers to help them understand how to establish relationships with their Māori students, to create effective, responsive learning contexts in which students' cultural identities are affirmed. This professional development seeks to increase the educational engagement and improve achievement levels for Māori students. Māori students in this project are indeed achieving at levels previously unseen (Bishop, Berryman, Cavanagh, & Teddy, 2007).

Bishop et al. (2003) co-constructed an effective teaching profile. This profile identifies that effective learning contexts for Māori students are those where teachers create culturally appropriate and responsive contexts for learning in their classrooms. Culturally appropriate contexts reflect iconography, representative of a particular culture. Culturally responsive contexts also encourage students to bring their own sense making to the learning. Within this effective teaching profile, teachers demonstrate the following core understandings and qualities:

1. Teachers avoid deficit theorising about when and why they can't do something to raise Māori student achievement. Instead they take responsibility to focus on what they can do to make a difference for the Māori students in their classes;
2. Teachers have high expectations of all their students, including Māori, and are committed to adapting their teaching methods in order for achievement levels to improve. They are aware of the necessity to bring about this change in Māori students' achievement levels in education;
3. Teachers care genuinely for their students, so that the students' cultural experiences form the basis for any learning and teaching interactions to take place, and above all else, Bishop et al. (2003) identify that students must be cared for as culturally-located beings;
4. The achievement of Māori students is a genuine concern for teachers and there is a genuine desire to raise these achievement levels;
5. Teachers create a secure and culturally safe learning environment, where they can incorporate their pedagogical knowledge with their pedagogical imagination;
6. Teachers successfully engage in effective teaching interactions with Māori students where Māori students feel comfortable to be themselves, where both teachers and students can learn from each other;
7. Teachers use a range of teaching and learning strategies to promote effective interactions and deepen relationships with their students. Effective interactions are interactive activities that enable students to initiate and determine their own learning;
8. Teachers use students' evidence in formative ways in order to better understand what they need to do to improve the learning outcomes for students. This point links to the later section on socio-cultural contexts, where teachers create learning through conversations in which the students construct new knowledge, based on the knowledge and experiences that they bring to the learning context. The students use their cultural experiences to understand and to develop new understandings.

(Adapted from Bishop, & Berryman, 2006)

The Achievement of Minoritised students in New Zealand schools: Pasifika Students

Just as disparities in learning outcomes are occurring for Māori in mainstream schools, so too are they occurring for students from Pasifika communities. Many research findings about Māori students and students from Pasifika communities (and other minority cultures) state the importance of schools providing closer links between the curriculum they deliver and the cultural practices the students engage in at home (Berryman, 2001; Bishop, & Glynn, 2000; Cummins, 1989; McNaughton, 2002). Cummins (1989) argues that minority students are empowered when their home language and culture are incorporated into the curriculum (cited in Barnard, & Glynn, 2003). For example, McNaughton (2002) suggests that teachers could utilise recitation activities as an instructional strategy given that many students from Pasifika communities experience this activity as a common practice at home in preparation for church activities.

It is essential that we listen to the voices of minority cultures to guide us if we are to raise the low achievement results for these students (Bishop et al., 2003). Fletcher, Parkhill, Fa'afoi and Taleni (2008, p.4) go so far as to suggest that the “[i]dentification of practices that accommodate and acknowledge Pasifika culture, should therefore help teachers and teacher-educators more effectively meet the literacy learning needs of Pasifika students”.

Fletcher, et al. (2008) undertook a study that involved speaking with students from Pasifika communities, their parents and other community members in order to gain a better understanding of how these students learn. As a result, these researchers claim there were several factors contributing to the ways in which Pasifika students' learning can be effectively supported (Fletcher, et al., 2008). The main findings in terms of literacy learning from the study concluded:

1. In literacy learning, students have a greater chance of success when the contexts for learning are culturally responsive and culturally inclusive. The students stressed the desire for the resources they are exposed to, to reflect that of their own culture. The Ministry of Education strongly recommends that texts contain authentic Pacific perspectives and celebrate the life of Pacific Island communities;

2. The students explained the importance of their own culture and their desire to write about their cultural experiences within their lives. However, many students the researchers spoke with claimed that they were rarely given the opportunity to choose topics for writing themselves, in order for this to happen;
3. The need for feedback and feed forward to be regular, specific and explicit, in other words, to be of quality;
4. Teachers' awareness of bullying and the need for it to be removed from both inside and outside the classroom;
5. General factors also include cultural mismatches between them and the teachers, feelings of inadequacy and related shyness, negative teacher responses and poor classroom management.

(Adapted from Fletcher, et al., 2008)

Collaboration with Communities

Over the past two decades there has been an increasing realisation of the central role that culture plays in classroom practice (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2003). Research on student learning has continued to emphasise the match, and miss-match between the culture of the educational institution and that of the home, and how crucial this match is to developing high levels of student achievement (Berryman, 2008; Bishop, & Glynn, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2003; Phillips, McNaughton, & MacDonald, 2001). The Ministry of Education (2003) states that “[p]artnerships that align school and home practices and enable parents to actively support their children’s in-school learning have shown some of the strongest impacts on student outcomes” (p.44).

For many families, mainly those from the dominant culture, activities and what is constituted as *knowledge* at school are compatible with those found at home. Families thus positioned can capitalise on the benefits that such a match brings. Contemporary sociologists term this as having *cultural capital* (Nash, 1993, cited in Ministry of Education, 2003), that is, children have a storehouse of experiences, knowledge and attitudes that they can capitalise on when they go to school, given appropriate and effective school and classroom pedagogies. In terms of equity, all children, Māori or non-Māori, Pasifika or non-Pasifika, should have the same opportunities in

mainstream education to access an equal degree of their own cultural capital. Beecher and Arthur (2001) outline the fundamental role of the teacher is to move beyond taking up a cultural deficit position on diverse family literacy practices, a position that is based solely on their privileging of their own cultural experiences (cited in Ministry of Education, 2003). Educators need to shift away from deficit thinking that suggests the problem with students in a minoritised position, begins and ends in the home, to thinking about how to capitalise on this difference in culture positively, in order to improve the learning outcomes for these students (Bishop et al., 2003). Smith (1991, cited in Berryman, 2008) maintains that educators have both a professional and an ethical responsibility to consult appropriately with the students' families and communities. By listening to the experiences of the students themselves as the basis for new learning, teachers are able to connect with the notion of cultural responsiveness. Learning can then be connected to what Bruner terms the student's *cultural toolkit* (Bruner, 1996). This cultural toolkit enables the student to unlock new learning by drawing on their own culturally-based knowledge, skills and experiences. Bishop and Glynn (1999) suggest that,

[i]ncorporating culturally generated sense-making processes that students bring into classroom interactions will increase the positive interactions and participation in classroom activities of Māori students. This in turn, will enable fuller participation in the benefits that education can offer (p. 132).

Bishop and Glynn argue that it is not by seeing our selves as *one* nation, but by recognising how our own values, morals and ethics determine our attitudes and behaviours, that we will be better able to understand and respond to the different behaviours and attitudes of others. This allows us to understand how our own culture differs from the cultures of students from different ethnic groups. It is often only when we understand power and privileged position of our own culture that we are able to see that other people have a culture and that they have a right to have their own culture recognised and affirmed. Berryman and Wearmouth suggest that many teachers do not realise the consequences of enforcing their own cultural beliefs onto those of their students:

Many teachers from the majority school-culture fail to recognise the full implications of their own cultural expectations and assumptions that they place, perhaps unwittingly, on students from minority cultures. Nor do they

understand the influence that their own culture and attitudes plays in this (2008, p. 10).

Teachers and other educators need to look beyond school sanctioned pedagogies in order to capitalise on the pedagogies and cultural literacies, students from minoritised cultures such as Māori and Pasifika, bring with them to school. These valuable cultural literacies can and should be used to ground learning and teaching pedagogies. In so doing, power might be shifted from the mind of the teacher to empower and align with the mind of their student. This shift in power, in a bid to utilise what is in the minds of the students in order to better inform teachers, is similar to what McNaughton terms as the “meeting of minds” (2002).

Teachers would be better able to understand and accept how students’ cultural experiences can support their classroom learning programmes if they could learn to access the wide variety of resources available in diverse communities. Corson (1998) explains how policies of real reform in educating for diversity must involve the community in its work: the community’s knowledge; expertise; and cultural practices. Thus, community members are invaluable in assisting teachers to bring the culture from the homes in to the classroom, to support the literacy learning and teaching of these students. Corson discusses this perspective in terms of meaningful school reform in the following extract:

Community-based education begins with people and their immediate reality. Above all, it allows them to become meaningfully involved in shaping their own futures through the school and other agencies in their community. In fact, meaningful school reform often depends on this kind of participation, in which people renegotiate and reconstruct the ways in which a school relates to its community’s interests (Corson, 1998, p. 26).

From a teacher’s perspective, allowing students to bring their own cultural experiences into the classroom, as opposed to simply relying on themselves to deliver the classroom curriculum from their own mono-cultural, limited cultural position opens up greater possibilities. Freire, as cited in Corson (1998), suggests that no curriculum is neutral, especially one which has been selected by people who have different cultural understandings themselves, from the learners. For example, there is

a responsibility for schools to prepare themselves for the cultural literacy practices that students bring with them to school, rather than simply preparing families for the cultural literacy practices of the classroom (Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2008). The issue here concerns whose knowledge constitutes legitimate classroom or curriculum knowledge (Bishop, et al., 2003). It is important to note that traditionally, students from diverse cultural backgrounds have a rich range of literacy activities which are often viewed as invalid within the classroom environment, as teachers impose their own knowledge and literacy activities. Berryman and Wearmouth (2008) provide an example of a five year old girl who had been raised to speak her own indigenous language and within indigenous cultural practices, being asked by her teacher at school to recite a nursery rhyme. Although the teacher was prepared to accept *any* nursery rhyme, the fact that this girl may have learned traditional chants and songs as she had grown up was not considered, thus may have been seen to be irrelevant, or invalid. The girl's response was to hang her head in shame, while attempting to make sense of the situation from her own cultural experiences. The teacher did not stop to consider that what she was expecting of this child was well outside her cultural experience. She also did not attempt to access alternatives to nursery rhymes within this child's own culture. The danger here was that this child may be judged in terms of her 'not knowing' (nursery rhymes), rather than in terms of her 'knowing' (chants and songs).

Harker (2007) states that whilst it is necessary for schools to understand the culture of the home and communities in terms of the values, motivations and attitudes on which they are based, it is equally as important for the culture of the school to be understood and supported by families. With this in mind it is important to understand that improved interactions and understandings between the home and school could almost certainly lead to improved achievement outcomes for students of minority cultures. Phillips, McNaughton and MacDonald (2001) also express the need to have a closer match between home and school experiences. The more schools attempt to become a part of their communities and incorporate community patterns of learning and teaching pedagogies, the greater effect school will have on the achievement of minority students (Ministry of Education, 2003).

The Ministry of Education (2003) explains how it is heavily reliant on schools and education providers to initiate links with the communities and families. It suggests that this must be done in a way that allows the families and community members to participate on their own terms and within their own cultural domain, rather than on the schools' terms as has traditionally been the case. The Ministry of Education (2003) suggests:

[a] key research finding is that school-home partnerships are critically dependent upon the agency of educators, their ability to avoid deficit or stereotypical characterisations of parents and caregivers, and their ability to initiate links, respond to, and recognise strengths within the diverse families of their students (p.44).

An example of schools becoming part of their community can occur at annual cultural festivals. In the particular school community in which this study is set, where its ethnic composition was made up of approximately 75% Pasifika students, parents and community members volunteered on an annual basis to organise and prepare the cultural festival in collaboration with staff and students at the school. The parents and members of the community spent many hours in preparation leading up to this particular event. They were positioned as and participated as the *experts* and in terms of their participation they were in control of a wide range of activities that began long before the day took place and ended long after. Community members and parents were involved in the choreography of the routines and the organising of equipment such as musical instruments and the music itself. Some of the parents and community members also took part in the performances, supporting their children in background roles such as drumming. Also included among the community expertise and input was the time and effort that was spent in making the costumes, as well as dressing and making up the students on the day, and helping to pack everything away afterwards. This school and its parents and community saw this event as a chance to celebrate the diversity of the Pasifika cultures as well as Māori and other cultures whose children attended the school. The high number of families and community members in the audience on the day was indication of how effective the event was at engaging its community in school life. What made this event successful and continues to sustain the school and community partnerships in this school is that the parents and community members chose to participate because they want to. This relationship

allowed for the parents to manage the event on their own terms (in consultation with the school).

Another example is individual teachers who choose to spend their Saturday mornings down at the school's local sports parks, supporting students and families from their school by attending their games and activities, in an environment that belonged to the students and their home communities. This sends messages from the teachers themselves, as representatives of the school out to the students (who may not necessarily be in the teachers' classes), as well as to parents and other members of the community. The messages highlight that teachers do care, that they are genuinely interested in their students' lives and that what children are involved in outside of school *is* indeed important. Such teacher participation in community activities also contributes to the relationships developing between the students and their teachers, thus helping to bridge that infamous *gap* or miss-match between home and school. These teachers were inquiring into the lives of the students, which supports Mercado's (2001) view to be discussed further on.

Relationships that emerge from examples such as these allow for Māori students and students from Pasifika communities, as well as other students from minority cultures to be taught more effectively and therefore potentially to learn more effectively. Such examples also have the potential to transfer the language, images, and cultural practices of these students into everyday classroom and school curriculum and to incorporate them in classroom pedagogy. An example of incorporating a Māori preferred cultural practice for Māori students into the classroom, is adopting the tuakana-teina relationships involved in peer tutoring to personalise instruction in a *safe* learning and teaching environment. Rather than the teacher having to be the *expert* and *fountain of all knowledge* (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999) all of the time, within the tuakana-teina relationship, this role can belong to that of the more knowledgeable and experienced peer (Glynn, Berryman, Atvars, & Harawira, 1998).

Mercado (2001) believes it is certainly within the role of the teacher to find out and get to know the child and their family and to establish and make connections between home and school, suggesting that this plays a vital part in students' education (cited in Ministry of Education, 2003). Mercado goes on to say that in light of the increasing

diversity within classrooms, such inquiry should become a common pedagogical practice, which builds important knowledge about differences among learners. This is also further highlighted in a recent Ministry of Education publication that states, “[a] commitment to equal opportunity for diverse learners means providing genuine opportunities for high-quality instruction and ‘ways into’ academic curricula that are consistent with language and interaction patterns of home and community” (Shepard, 2001, p.1095, cited in Ministry of Education, 2003, p.32).

Language and Learning Outcomes, Achievement in Writing

Traditional approaches to the teaching of writing have focused on the product with little regard for the cultural experiences of the learner. Further there has been an emphasis on surface features and the mechanics of text, grammar and spelling, rather than content and meaning (Smith, & Elley, 1997). There are other approaches however, for example, in the late 1970s and early 1980s Donald Graves introduced the *process writing* approach (Graves, 1983) that was designed to encourage beginning writers to engage in the writing processes of competent adult writers.

O’Rourke and Phillips (1989) carried out a study on the effects of process writing on New Zealand students from a diverse range of cultures. The results indicated that many aspects of the teaching of writing reinforced a dominant cultural perspective, although certain key elements were inclined to assist the learning of Māori (and Pasifika) students. These included teachers drawing on a diverse range of role models in New Zealand writing, enabling scaffolding students into written language from oral language, sharing of works-in-progress, fostering peer-tutoring roles encompassing a more able peer and a less able peer working together (referred to in Māoridom as a *tuakana-teina* relationship), and also providing students with opportunities to experience a sense of pride (in Māoridom, this is referred to as *mana*, cited by The Ministry of Education, 2003).

It seems clear that how students initiate writing and how teachers and others respond to that writing are critical determinants of students’ writing progress. Vargas (1978) contends that the method by which students are taught to write may be one reason why so many of us do not learn to write very well. She notes that many students learning to write are seldom given the opportunity of seeing the impact that their

writing has upon another person. They seldom learn that what they write, can make someone happy, sad, interested or excited, or want to share in their experiences and feelings. When young children attempt to initiate writing at home, parents and older siblings typically act as responsive and interactive partners rather than as language assessors.

Socio-cultural Contexts for Learning

Socio-cultural perspectives on human learning maintain that the acquisition of linguistic knowledge is interdependent with the acquisition of cultural knowledge (Hohepa, Smith, Smith, & McNaughton, 1992). This notion implies that learners are participating within contexts that invite them to be active rather than passive participants in the process, thus allowing them to acquire both linguistic and socio-cultural knowledge. Learning begins and is *mediated* from birth. Berryman and Wearmouth (2008) contend that we are immersed in cultural-based literacy practices around *mediators* such as parents, carers, siblings, relatives and other community members from the moment we are born. This is consistent with a key theme in Vygotsky's (1978) work regarding how all of our thinking is framed around the culture and resources we are immersed in from birth. It is deeply *social* in the sense that it is dependent on social interactions within culturally derived contexts, tools and knowledge. Thus, one learns through the culture and simultaneously about the culture. In the words of Anderson and Fraser (2002),

[f]irst of all, learning is social in the sense that all of our higher intellectual functions are seen to depend on the symbol systems, the accumulated knowledge, established practices for reasoning and problem solving about specific subjects and technological aids to thinking, including computers, that have been handed down to us by our cultures (p.2).

As a result of this, children who come from cultures other than that of the majority cultural group, and to which the mainstream education system aligns, can often result in a miss-match between the culture of the home and school. Even when a student appears to be adapting well to a new environment on personal, social and academic levels, this miss-match may still be occurring, causing a sense of confusion (Ballam, 2008). Campbell (2000) explains how students in this situation learn ways to merely *survive* by moving constantly from one cultural context to another, “[e]ssentially

learning what is “expected” of them and how they should conduct themselves in each situation” (cited in Ballam, 2008, p.33).

Such a miss-match has in the past, set up minoritised students for educational failure. This can have a ripple effect into adulthood and thus into wider society as well. For example, Berryman (2008) states that incorrect diagnosis by teachers and remedial programmes can set students on a pathway of failure such that negative experiences associated with school can lead to on-going assumptions and perceptions of school and low self-esteem by students.

Glynn (1987) believes that in all cultures, initial language learning is acquired through responsive social contexts which reflect the social and cultural practices of the home and community. This is consistent with Rogoff (2003) who states that humans develop through their changing participation in socio-cultural activities within their communities and that, “community arrangements contribute in important ways to children’s opportunities to learn the mature ways of their community from observing and joining in with their elders” (2003, p.149). Glynn, Wearmouth and Berryman (2006) explain how from a very young age, the cultural contexts within which we are socialised, begin to shape our ability to organise meaning in ways that we can communicate with others.

Glynn, Wearmouth and Berryman (2006) identified four characteristics of socio-cultural contexts that facilitate active engagement in learning. Each of these characteristics is listed and described separately below.

1. Responsive social contexts provide opportunities for learners to initiate.

In any context, whether it is a child learning to write or draw, the learner should be given agency over his/her own learning. They must be given opportunities to initiate questions and conversations on their terms, and not simply left to respond directly to adult or peer questions alone. Many classroom learning situations leave little room for learners to initiate, as teachers, through their own use of questioning and directing normally question learners in a way that the child’s voice is omitted and replaced by what the teacher perceives the importance of the learning context to be.

An example here is given by Berryman and Wearmouth (2008) of a five year old girl who, prior to the time she started school had been raised in cultural learning contexts that had modelled that good learners learn by participating, asking questions, and by examining and contributing their own thoughts and ideas for feedback. She also knew that trying things out was encouraged and that not knowing was a legitimate part of learning. By her fifth week of formal schooling she had learned that sitting up nicely, keeping quiet and listening were most valued in the learning environment and that the only really important questions were those that the teacher posed. She had also learnt that the teacher's questions usually had a correct or wrong answer, and that the correct answers were valued more. There seemed to be little room for student generated questions and conversational discussion and learning. Being correct was an important part of this new context for learning and just at a time when she needed to be encouraged to take risks if she was to learn to read and write, she was learning how risky learning really was.

One key to promoting child initiation in oral language is using a delayed reaction strategy. That is, delaying what you as the teacher (or parent/more-skilled partner) might feel ready to say. This delay provides the space for the student to have the time and opportunity to initiate and direct the conversation themselves. This would in turn lead the teacher into an appropriate response in a conversational manner. A responsive teacher would observe carefully at the drawing or writing or what ever it happened to be, and wait for the student to initiate some statement or comment. This is an important intervention where teachers can hand the control of the learning interactions over to the student. Glynn, Wearmouth and Berryman suggest "in a responsive learning relationship, children not only learn how to use language to obtain particular information, or to access material and activities, but they also learn a powerful general strategy for engaging and maintaining adult attention" (2006, p. 8).

2. Shared activities between less-skilled and more-skilled learners.

The notion of a shared activity implies that it is functional for both the more-skilled and less-skilled participants. A responsive social context should provide opportunities for the learner to interact and engage in a shared activity, with the more-skilled partner whom they have a positive social relationship with. As the learning context develops, so too does the affirmation of the relationship between learner and

teacher. Glynn (1985) states how a genuinely shared activity is one which involves enjoyment from both the more-skilled and less-skilled participants, where the control and direction of the activity is reasonably balanced between the two. In contrast, a context which is generally teacher-led through the use of continual questioning allows for minimal opportunity for the student to contribute. This strategy does not predispose to engaging conversations, and therefore is not a genuine shared task. A relaxed enjoyable learning context however, allows for both participants to gain information about how the other thinks, acts and feels, which in turn can strengthen their growing relationship. It also allows the opportunity for the learner to learn more about the writing process, as well as about eliciting help from the more-skilled partner for the specific task. For example, when a teacher intends to engage in conversation with a student about how their weekend went, in oral preparation for writing, instead of the teacher merely questioning the student, using what they think to be the appropriate questions, the teacher could leave it open for the student to initiate responses. By making use of wait time (delay) as previously discussed, during which the student is given time to initiate and/or continue the conversation in a direction that they choose, teachers are more likely to tap into the child's experiences and thus be more responsive.

3. Reciprocity and mutual influence.

Responsive social contexts also involve a mutual reciprocal influence, for example learners interacting together can have an impact on each other, and the learning and behaviour is modified as a result of the interaction with the others. The Māori metaphor of *Ako*, that is literally meaning 'to teach and to learn' (Pere, 1982) emphasises this notion of reciprocity, whereby both partners in the situation can take turns at being the learners and the teachers. This means that students can participate using their own sense-making processes and share those with each other. Similarly, Rogoff (2003) states how mutual understanding is bridged between both participants, not just being attributed from one or the other.

Glynn, et al. (2006) give examples of studies having been done of successful peer tutoring in reading: (Glynn, Berryman, Bidois, et al., 1996; Houghton, & Bain, 1993; Houghton, & Glynn, 1993; Limbrick, McNaughton, & Glynn, 1985; Wheldall, and Mettem, 1985); and in spelling (Dineen, Clark, & Risley, 1977). In these studies

learning gains have been just as effective for peer tutors as they have been for tutees. Similarly, reciprocity and mutual influence have been found in studies involving peer management of classroom behaviour modifications, where unanticipated behaviour changes have occurred in the peer managers' own behaviour, in addition to the behaviour of the targeted students being monitored (Sanders, & Glynn, 1977).

An example of this within a classroom setting is involved in a reading strategy teachers often term *buddy reading*. This strategy can be implemented in a number of ways, such as within a class or between students from a different class level within the school. It involves each taking turns at reading to each other, using a book that is suitable for the readers' individual level and preferably one that they themselves have selected. Ideally, teachers would pair a more-skilled reader with a less-skilled reader who would be able to connect successfully on a social level (*tuakana-teina*). As the more-skilled peer reads, the less-skilled peer is exposed to any new concepts presented in the text by someone other than the teacher, often having a strong influence. The more-skilled peer also benefits from this interaction, consolidating what they know by playing the part of the more-skilled participant. As the roles reverse, and the less-skilled peer begins to read and consolidate what they know, the more-skilled peer is responsible for supporting the reader if necessary. This strategy also leans itself to consolidation of knowledge by the more-skilled peer as well. As a result, both the more-skilled and less-skilled peers stand to benefit. There are many studies, such as those mentioned above, which provide clear evidence that support this concept of *ako* in the context of peer tutoring.

4. Amount and type of feedback.

The fourth feature of a responsive social context is the frequency and quality of the feedback received for learning by both participants. Glynn (1985) suggests that underachievement in written tasks in some school settings may be in part due to the lack of frequent, immediate, quality feedback. Hattie (2003) identifies effective feedback as the most powerful influence on student learning. Effective feedback goes beyond the general *good boy/girl* statement, or a student being simply issued with a sticker. Instead, effective feedback incorporates both specific and explicit comments in which the student knows exactly what he/she did well. In this way they know what was valued and will be more likely to repeat it next time. In addition, effective

feedback may include a *next learning step* where the student is told, or better still it is established together, what he/she can do next time in order to more so improve the quality of the learning. Bishop, et al. (2003) refer to this as feed forward. Feedback is not only limited to teacher to student, students can also be supported to give each other feedback as well. One example of effective feedback is when a student is reading their writing back to the teacher and the student's individual personal writing goal is to be able to use a variety of sentence beginnings. The teacher can give specific feedback to the student such as "I liked the way you have used a variety of sentence beginnings like *Mum, finally* and *crash!*" The teacher will draw attention to each of the different beginnings by pointing or perhaps even highlighting them. This type of effective feedback can be adapted to be provided by the student themselves, as well as by a peer, in terms of a self or peer assessment.

Glynn, Wearmouth and Berryman (2006) explain how the gains in students receiving this type of quality feedback also go beyond simply their learning, to motivating students not only to complete tasks to their highest ability, but results also in fewer management problems as students learn to seek this level of feedback. The students are actually more motivated to learn and having this regularly acknowledged results in less of a need for the teacher to use control and management over their behaviour.

Responsive written feedback next incorporates all four characteristics of socio-cultural contexts as presented above.

Responsive Written Feedback

The originator of this idea of responsive written feedback was that of a woman called Julie Vargas, in 1978. She emphasised that students' poor writing skills may have resulted from the lack of an immediate responsive audience within the classroom setting. The first New Zealand study on responsive written feedback drew on Vargas' 1978 study and was carried out by Jerram, Glynn and Tuck (1988). Teachers responded to students' writing with personal written responses, as opposed to corrective error feedback. The study concluded that the students wrote more in their responses and their writing was more interesting and imaginative.

Berryman and Glynn (2002) describe responsive written feedback as providing the student with an adult or peer support person who has been instructed in their role as a written responder. Adults or peers are instructed to respond to the messages in the students' writing, rather than attempt to correct any errors such as incorrect grammar, structure, spelling, or make any evaluative comments. In their written response they are reminded of the importance of remaining genuine and of relating the messages in the student's writing to real, appropriate experiences in their own lives. The responders are instructed to respond to what they understand the messages in the writing to be. They can pose one or two questions for the student in order to gain a better understanding of what the student is trying to say (Berryman et al., 2001) or to take the student forward in their writing. Responders are trained to limit their use of questioning however, as excessive questioning can limit students' opportunities to *initiate* and could possibly undermine their agency over their writing.

The responders are aware that the writing is to be a brief, personalised response performed regularly, ideally once a week. Berryman and Glynn (2002) suggest the writing should then be returned promptly to the students in order for feedback to have the most effective impact for the student. The teacher is also instructed to monitor this process; he/she collects the ten minute writing samples of unassisted writing from the students and is responsible for returning them to the responder each week (Berryman, & Glynn, 2002).

Responsive written feedback adopts a socio-cultural perspective, in that engagement in these particular literacy practices is through interactions with others in social situations, thus enabling cognitive and intellectual skills to develop (Glynn, Wearmouth, & Berryman, 2006). Regular participation in the responsive writing allows positive social relationships to develop between both learning partners interdependently. Fundamental interactive and social contexts for learning such as these are identified as responsive social contexts (Glynn, 1985; 1987). Responsive written feedback therefore takes place within responsive social contexts for learning in which "more-skilled partners act as a responsive, interactive audience for the messages students are trying to write" (Glynn, Wearmouth, & Berryman, 2006, p. 93). These kinds of learning contexts are characterised by a balance of control over the initiation and continuation of the learning interactions between both the more-skilled

and less-skilled writer (Glynn, Wearmouth, & Berryman, 2006). The reciprocal benefits, in terms of intellectual and social domains for both participants, as well as the role reversal of the traditional learner and teacher roles and the feedback being responsive rather than evaluative, all play their part in shaping responsive social contexts for learning.

Glynn, Jerram and Tuck (1986) researched this responsive written feedback procedure in an English language context. As a result they identified a series of nine themes that emerged from the responder's responsive written feedback to their students' writing. These themes were:

1. Speaking with the writer;
2. Personalising the responses;
3. Having shared similar experiences;
4. Identifying with the theme;
5. Enjoying the content;
6. Identifying with the characters;
7. Supporting the writer's efforts;
8. Having empathy with the writer;
9. Anticipating a theme developing

The following responsive writing studies shifted the focus from *all students* to a focus on the writing of Māori students, in both English and Māori immersion contexts. This focus is related to the earlier discussion of the need for pedagogies that are culturally responsive to the needs of Māori and Pasifika students in New Zealand. As both a teacher of students from Māori and Pasifika cultures and the writer of this thesis I was searching for a pedagogy that could help me to address issues faced by dominant-culture teachers who may be unwittingly limiting opportunities for traditionally minoritised students. I saw the pedagogy within the responsive written feedback procedure as potentially helping me to address this situation in my own class.

Glynn, Berryman, O'Brien and Bishop (2000) evaluated and reported on responsive written feedback in a Māori language context. A responsive written feedback programme was carried out between students from different schools in which a more-able peer (termed tuakana in Māori-medium contexts) acted as the tutor and a less-able peer acted that of the tutee (termed teina). The study reported positive gains in the rate of correct writing by all students involved in the study. The study also showed how responsive written feedback could be applied in Māori language immersion settings. Glynn, et al. (2000) further concluded that by "helping to construct a responsive, social context for writing, responsive writing can be seen as capable of contributing to the wider process of Māori language revitalisation" (p.21).

A Responsive writing study was also carried out by Berryman (2001) in the context of Māori language immersion students' transitioning into an English language secondary school. The students, who were in year 6 to 8, undertook the responsive writing in their targeted language for transition (English). In general, a range of different measures displayed the positive impact that the responsive written feedback programmes had, including that of improved quantity and quality of writing produced by that of the students. Berryman found that the total number of words written increased significantly between both the pre and post-programme samples (Year 8 by 33 words, year 7 by 34 and year 6 with a smaller increase of 15 words). In addition, while all students showed an increase in the total number of words written, the high percentage of accuracy by students across all levels was maintained (ranging from 83% to 93%). The total numbers of challenging words written (words at level 4 and beyond the highest level of the Arvidson (1970) spelling lists) also showed a steady increase across the course of the programme, with no detrimental effect on ratings of accuracy. The ratings of audience impact and overall language quality also showed increases at pre and post writing assessment points. Overall, the gains in rate, accuracy and the quality of writing were significant for the target language (English) but importantly, for Berryman and for this kura kaupapa Māori community, they had no detrimental effect on the language of instruction (Māori).

Conclusions from the Responsive written feedback (entitled *Tuhi Atu, Tuhi Mai*, in Māori medium contexts) research as outlined in *Kia Puawai ai Te Reo* (Berryman, et al., 2001) are as follows:

1. Both the students and responders were easily able to use this procedure;
2. Students and responders used features of responsive writing such as responding to each others' messages, with no use of corrective feedback;
3. The responsive writing programme was successful for all students, no matter how more or less skilled their writing was, as they all looked forward to the task;
4. The process of sharing their writing with each other and receiving a written response was enjoyed by both responders and students;
5. Although traditional corrective feedback was not used, all students believed that they had become better skilled writers;
6. All writing measures, both qualitative and quantitative, showed indications of improvement for all students;
7. Important language skills were learned and students' knowledge of language grew;
8. There was evidence to show that Māori students valued the Māori language skills they did have;
9. There was evidence of important cultural learning taking place, for example the tuakana-teina relationship between the responders and the students;
10. Students chose to write about personal experiences and more often Māori students would write about Māori in preference to non-Māori events;
11. Teachers found this to be a practical intervention that was simple to implement into their classroom programme;
12. Adult responders provided benefits to students in terms of being able to expose them to a wide range of language and writing models;
13. Both teachers and students found that this provided an authentic opportunity for writing, that is, there was a real purpose to their writing.

These elements have been evident across all of the responsive writing studies I have reviewed for this chapter. It is therefore my intention of this thesis, to determine the extent to which these elements were also present and effective in my study working with two different classes of predominantly Pasifika and Māori students, many of whom were second language learners of English and many of whom may have already experienced the negative impacts of having their own cultural experiences marginalised within mainstream classroom settings.

Chapter 2: Methodology and Method

Introduction

This thesis undertook a retrospective examination of two responsive writing studies that took place in my own classroom. Each of these studies sought ways to respond more effectively for six and seven year old students who were learning to develop their own written language skills in English. Most of these students came with different cultural experiences and/or languages.

These studies involved mixed methods research where both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. The quantitative research methods involved the collection of students' writing samples and then the analysis of these samples over time in terms of the amount of writing and ratings of the quality of the writing that was being undertaken. The qualitative research involved interviews with students and responders. The analysis of the data resulting from the two responsive written feedback studies from my own classroom and the combined experiences of some of the students and a writing responder from each of the studies have enabled me to develop a better understanding of the implications and applications of responsive written feedback for others. This thesis therefore, draws on student data that emerged from these two responsive writing studies and findings from some of the students talking about their own responsive writing experiences together with two writing responder interviews as well as my thoughts as the teacher.

Methodology

Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is relatively independent of researcher – researched relationships, in that it is based on obtaining precise, prescribed numerical data and therefore may be relatively less time consuming than its qualitative counter-part. Quantitative research is effective in obtaining large amounts of data from large groups of people. It also seeks to be fully replicable by striving for results that are context-free. The major characteristics of quantitative research are its focus on deduction, confirmation, theorising, hypothesising, explanation, prediction, standardised data collection and statistical analysis (Burke Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Research findings can be generalised, being based on conclusions from data obtained from and representative of random samples. Quantitative methods of research also seek to test

and validate existing theories as well as test hypotheses that are constructed typically before and sometimes after the data have been collected. The researcher carrying out this method of research remains largely emotionally-detached and interacts only minimally with the participants who are often seen as the *researched* or *subjects of study*. Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) warn how this may lead to the researcher developing theories that may not reflect the understandings of the local constituencies.

Qualitative Research

In qualitative research, a set of interpretative practices is used to study situations that involve the lived experiences of real people, their relationships, interactions and/or outcomes in their normal settings. It does this by allowing the researcher to work collaboratively alongside the research participants, in order to interpret and make sense of the participants and the way in which they view themselves (Berryman, 2008). The researcher creates opportunities for participants' voices to be heard and for others to reflect upon these experiences. Accessing participants' voices generally involves interviews, narrative inquiry and observations (Kemmis, & McTaggart, 2000). Qualitative research seeks to focus on the relationships between participants' strengths, ideas and ideologies and the cultural context within which they are located, as opposed to focussing on standardised or researcher-prescribed questions and observations. In qualitative research, choice of methodologies, research practices and tools cannot always be clearly defined or determined in advance, but rather is more dependent on the participants' responses to the researcher's questions. In this way, the context of the research, and the ways in which the research is carried out can evolve as the collaborative understanding dictates (Berryman, 2008). There is often no formal specification as to how long the research may take or controlled predictions of how the research may unfold. Researchers must remain aware of proceedings and adjust the process accordingly. In this way, "[t]he power of individuals in the research relationship is granted recognition in that the end product of any research project is the result of the reciprocal interactions between researcher and research participants" (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999, p.105).

Qualitative research methods provide an authentic process by which the research participants are able to define themselves, in relation to the research, as they see

themselves. Thomas (1993) explains how qualitative research allows the researcher to engage in attempts at relating to and communicating with the research participants, in order to develop an understanding and interpretation both of their own behaviour and the behaviour of other participants. The quality of power-sharing between the researcher and participants is clearly evident in qualitative research.

Mixed Methods Research

Mixed methods research involves a combination of both qualitative and quantitative research techniques, methods, approaches, concepts and language in order to strengthen the legitimacy and reliability of the research (Burke Johnson, & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). It is an open-ended form of research which recognises both qualitative and quantitative research strategies as complementing and strengthening each other. To be considered a mixed methods design, the findings must be mixed or integrated at some point. For example, a qualitative phase may be carried out to inform findings from a quantitative phase. In regards to mixed methods, Burke Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2004) contend, “a key feature of mixed methods research is its methodological pluralism or eclecticism, which frequently results in superior research (compared to monomethod research)” (p.14). Mixed methods is also an attempt to legitimate the use of multiple approaches to answering research questions, rather than constraining or restricting the researcher’s and participants’ choices. Mixed methods research moves away from the argument of qualitative verses quantitative, by drawing specific strengths from both methods, as seeing both as important and useful. Taking this mixed methods approach has allowed me to have the best chance of answering my specific research questions. It meant that the voices and narratives from the qualitative aspects of this research could be used to add meaning and strengthen the quantitative data from the analysis of the writing samples. Thus, qualitative research from the interviews I had with the students and the writing responders from each study, strengthened the quantitative data that was gathered and analysed from each of the responsive writing samples.

Kaupapa Māori Research

Kaupapa Māori research locates the structural dimensions of research around Māori aspirations, practices and preferences as central (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999). Although it does not always associate itself with research, in this thesis, a kaupapa Māori position

is referred to in terms of kaupapa Māori Research. Within kaupapa Māori research, the participants collaborate in partnership throughout the research process to determine the methodologies, methods, research questions, problems and solutions that will be employed. Bishop and Glynn (1999) explain how the need for such pedagogy comes at a time when mere celebrations and acknowledgment of cultural diversity alone can do little to challenge the existing pattern of dominance and subordination by the dominant culture in New Zealand. Kaupapa Māori research is participant-driven; an empowering form of research where the self-determination of participants is at the forefront of the research (Bishop, 1996). Kaupapa Māori research challenges traditional, Western-European methods of research that have dehumanised Māori through practices which have continued to assert Western ways of knowing, while denying the validity for Māori, of Māori knowledge, language and culture (Smith, 1999). Smith terms kaupapa Māori research as empowering research, because it asserts the validity of Māori knowledge, Māori people have reclaimed greater control over the research which is being carried out in a Māori constituted way.

As Smith (1999) explains, kaupapa Māori research cannot be carried out by non-Māori researchers working on their own, but they can work in collaboration with Māori researchers when they are invited or seek acceptance by such a group. Bishop (1996) constructed a model that suggested ways of empowering research that incorporate the Treaty of Waitangi's promises of self determination for Māori. This model incorporates the domains of the five core elements of *initiation*, *benefits*, *representation*, *legitimisation* and *accountability*. Around each of these five elements Bishop (1996) suggests researchers must ask themselves a series of critical questions. Firstly, initiation is concerned with how the research is initiated and then who will benefit from the research. A Māori cultural position within the research ensures that Māori must be part of the initiation of the research. When this occurs there is more likelihood for positive outcomes for Māori and for Māori to benefit. Bishop's model then explains representation, as involving whose ideas are being represented within all aspects of the research. He suggests that if research is to be carried out within a Māori perspective, it needs to entail Māori voice, Māori ideology, Māori concepts and social reality and Māori metaphors. The fourth element is legitimisation, which expects that kaupapa Māori research must represent the needs, interests and concerns

of Māori, and be legitimised by Māori. Finally, Bishop talks of accountability and challenges researchers to consider who they will be accountable to for their research. Kaupapa Māori research ensures that issues such as these remain secure within Māori preferred cultural practices, so as to not sideline Māori voice and Māori knowledge, as traditional western styles of research has done so in the past (Smith, 1999).

Bishop and Glynn (2000) identify six key elements within kaupapa Māori research as being: relative autonomy; cultural aspirations; reciprocal learning; mediation of home difficulties; extended family and collective vision/philosophy. These elements apply just as effectively to the analysis of kaupapa Māori learning and teaching contexts as they do to the analysis of kaupapa Māori research contexts. Adapted from Bishop and Glynn (2000), these six elements entail:

1. Relative autonomy/self determination (Tino rangatiratanga)

Perhaps the most fundamental element, relative autonomy and self determination allows for Māori to be in charge of their own destiny. The figurative meaning is that Māori should have the right to determine and control their own destiny, and to define and pursue a means of obtaining it. This element aligns itself to Bruner (1996), who suggests that when people participate on their own terms, this will bring with it ownership and commitment.

2. Cultural aspirations (Taonga tuku iho)

This element explores how education settings should invite Māori students to participate *as* Māori, where Māori culture, language and knowledge are accepted as normal, legitimate and valid. Māori students are able to be themselves, as classroom interactions are guided by Māori ways of knowing.

3. Reciprocal learning (Ako)

This learning and teaching element emphasises a reciprocal approach, where the teacher is not the fountain of all knowledge (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999), but rather a *partner* in the learning conversation. The teacher learns from the students, just as the students learn from the teacher. This allows the students to bring their sense-making processes to the learning relationship, as active learners, and as a right.

4. Mediation of socio-economic and home difficulties (Kia piki ake i ngā raruraru o te kainga)

This element explains how students do better at school when the experiences between the home and school are similar, because they are more able to participate in the

educational experiences that school offers. In addition, parents will want to participate in the education of their children and are more likely to do so when the school operates in ways that they can understand and approve of, in culturally familiar ways.

5. Extended family (Whānau)

This primary concept contains both values (cultural aspirations) and social processes (cultural practices). When teachers can foster such whānau-related relationships in the classroom, where commitment and connectedness are paramount and students are taking responsibility for the learning of others, then the classroom becomes a place where the students can share control over the decision-making process.

6. Collective vision/philosophy (Kaupapa)

This element involves a collectivist philosophy in which Māori students have the right to achieve excellence in both their language and culture. The kura kaupapa Māori movement (a movement that saw the evolution of schools which deliver the curriculum in the Māori language, based solely on Māori culture and knowledge) was based around this notion of collective vision. If Māori students are to succeed at school, there is a need to transfer such a philosophy into mainstream education settings.

Empowering Research

Empowering research is a form of research where the participants are empowered to act, as opposed to participants being disempowered, or marginalised, or limited to the role of respondent, as was often the case within traditional impositional Westernised forms of research. Power and control over issues such as Bishop's five themes of initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability were often imposed by the researcher's own agenda, interests and concerns (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999). Cram (2001) refers to such disempowerment as a researching *down*, where the researcher deploys their own interpretations and judgments on what the research participants have communicated. Gathering narratives from research participants allows for the participant's own experiences to be presented and their genuine voice to be heard for others to reflect upon. In this way participants are able to tell the researcher exactly what they understand and are thinking. One of the research issues that empowering research addresses, is that of the researcher-researched relationship. An equitable relationship between the researcher and the research participants must be

developed and this can occur through collaboration, when both the researched and researcher have a more equal role in the research process (Bishop et al., 2003). In this regard Bishop and Glynn (1999) suggest, “we need to promote a means of knowing that denies distance and separation and promotes commitment and engagement” (p. 103).

Participatory Research

Kemmis and McTaggart (2000) state that participatory research has three main attributes that distinguishes it from other forms of research. These are: a shared ownership of the research projects; community-based analysis of social problems; and orientation of action being taken within the community. By participating in their own inquiry, researcher participants allow themselves to assist in co-creating their own reality. This aligns itself neatly alongside aspects of kaupapa Māori research where participants involved in the research can collaborate together throughout the research process to determine the methodologies, methods, problems, participants and solutions employed (Berryman, 2008). This shared ownership makes for linkages between knowledge and power, allowing for collaborative relationships to develop.

Methods

Given that the reassertion of Māori cultural aspirations, preferences and practices can help to address the structural issues of power and control that have traditionally overpowered the voice of Māori in research, especially the voice of Māori students, I have chosen a kaupapa Māori form of research to carry out this study. I used this method to enhance the voices, and thus the self determination of the students in my class. The majority of these students were Māori, or from Pacific nations. As a non-Māori researcher, I did not carry this research out on my own, but sought to be included from the outset within a whānau of research participants who were Māori, or from Pacific cultures. Traditionally, these students are often minoritised in mainstream classrooms. Bishop’s (1996) research elements of initiation, benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability served to guide me throughout this study. Whakawhanaungatanga, the process of establishing relationships within a Māori context (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999) also helped to guide me as the researcher, as well as the students and their responders to make connections and develop a deeper respect and understanding for each other and thus to build a relationship with each

other. On this basis it was intended that a genuine relationship would develop with mutual agendas and interests within the responsive writing context. How the issues of initiation, benefits, responsibility, legitimisation and accountability were addressed through the processes involved in my research is outlined in more depth below.

The Role of the Researcher

In writing this thesis it is essential to acknowledge that I, as a writer, have taken the positions of both the teacher and the researcher. As mentioned above, I became involved in a participatory form of research where I worked with others: the students; their parents; a cultural advisor and with writing responders to assist in co-creating a more successful writing reality for the students in my class.

As a non-indigenous teacher I am aware of the potential miss-match between my own culture and language and those of my culturally diverse students. This situation may undermine the collaborative opportunities that I sought to develop within my classroom and with the parents of those culturally diverse students. Given that this study depended on collaboration and power-sharing with these groups, I have striven to ensure that the voices of the students and those with whom we worked were not compromised or over-powered by my own voice, as either the teacher or now as the researcher. I have sought to avoid compromising the ethical and cultural authenticity and acceptability of the research in this regard. In order to do this I have accepted cultural advice throughout the study and endeavoured to work in collaborative and culturally appropriate ways that follow this advice.

Bishop (1994) points out that non-indigenous researchers also have an obligation to contribute to a kaupapa Māori form of research in recognition of their need to uphold the Treaty of Waitangi articles of partnership, protection and participation. I have an obligation to contribute as best as I am able to the research, however, this must be without imposing my own world-view on the research participants. In order to do this, I have used Bishop's five themes and the critical questions mentioned previously to guide my actions throughout this research.

In Table 2.1 below, the first column lists the five elements from Bishop's (1996) model for evaluating power-sharing relationships with Māori in research. In the

second column, I have listed the questions that arose in relation to each of these themes within the context of my own research. In the third column I give some examples of ways in which my study has incorporated each of the elements from the model into it.

Table 2.1

**Implementing Kaupapa Māori Educational Research in the present study
(Adapted from Bishop and Glynn, 1999)**

| Themes | Questions | Key Methods in Response |
|----------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Initiation | Who initiates the project? What are the goals of the project? Who sets the goals? Who sets the research questions? Who designs the work? | Responsive writing was suggested by a Māori educator/researcher as a suitable response for students needing help with their writing. Students and families chose to participate. Māori cultural advisor helped provide parameters of working together. |
| Benefits | What benefits will there be? Who will get the benefits? What difference will this study make for Māori? How does this research support Māori cultural aspirations? | Improvement in quality of writing as well as students' self esteem. New relationships were established. Māori and other second language learners in future educational settings may be able to benefit from these findings. Allowed for student and research participant voice as research was participant-driven. |
| Representation | Whose interests, needs and concerns does the research represent? How were the goals and major questions of the study established? How were the tasks allocated? What agency do individuals or groups have? Whose voice is heard? Who will do the work? | Sought permission from parents and feedback from students as much as possible. Worked with writing responders with same cultural backgrounds as the students. Worked with cultural advisor. Sought and established student voice. Writing was based on students' own experiences. |
| Legitimation | Who is going to process the data? Who is going to consider the results of the processing? What happens to the results? Who defines what is accurate, true and complete in a text? Who theorises the findings? | Responders as research participants have their own voice presented. Students' own writing is accepted as legitimate. Worked with cultural advisor. Parents participated at a final meeting between students and responders. |
| Accountability | Who is the researcher accountable to? Who is to have accessibility to research findings? Who has control over the distribution of knowledge? | Worked with cultural advisor, throughout the project. Provided an opportunity for students, their parents and responders to come together at the end of the study. Provided effective support for students, who showed improvement. |

Responsive Written Feedback

As discussed in chapter one, responsive written feedback provides the student with an adult, or more experienced support person who has been trained in their role as writing responder. Students wrote regularly (usually once a week for ten weeks), for timed periods of ten minutes. They then had a further timed period of five minutes to edit and proof-read their writing using a different coloured writing tool from that used in the ten minute writing time. The students were able to make their own choice of writing topic. Writing responders were instructed to respond to the messages in the students' writing, rather than commenting on or attempting to correct any errors, such as incorrect grammar or spelling. In implementing responsive written feedback, it is important that the responder remains genuine, relating the messages in the student's writing to appropriate experiences in their own lives. The responders are instructed to respond to what they understand the messages in the students' writing. They were required to limit their use of questions to one or two per response, in order to provide maximum opportunity for students to take the initiative in writing what they wanted to say (Berryman, et al., 2001).

Responsive written feedback provides a context in which the elements of representation and legitimisation in Bishop's power-sharing research model mentioned above may begin to be addressed respectfully. The responders and the teacher/researcher are accepting that what the student has written is legitimate. The message the student has sent is acceptable and is worthy of being responded to (even if spelling, punctuation and grammar may not be all absolutely correct). The student is represented by his/her own voice and not that of the teacher. Consequently, the content of the writing lies within the control and authority of the writers themselves. Although students are able to access the teacher's support throughout this process, the teacher is not directing the student, or telling them what to write or how to write it. In this way the students' own learning is personalised and self determined.

The responders were aware that the books were to be returned promptly to the students in order for the writing exchange to have the most impact. Responsive written feedback adopts a socio-cultural perspective, where engagement in particular literacy practices, such as this one, enables cognitive and intellectual skills to develop within the very process of learning through actively doing (Scribner & Cole, 1981).

Students learn to write and about writing through the process of writing. Regular participation in responsive writing also allows interdependent and positive social relationships between both learning partners to develop. Such fundamental interactive and social contexts for learning are identified as responsive social contexts (Glynn, 1985; 1987). Both the responders and the students are power-sharing and gaining equal benefits, another element within Bishop's model (1996).

Study one: data collection and analysis

This study began in 2005, when I was teaching a class of 22 Year three and four students who were between the ages of six and eight. It was initiated by a person outside of the local community who, unlike me, had cultural links to some of the students within my class. As I spoke with her, I expressed the concerns I had about improving my writing programme in order to give more effective support to the students. She suggested that we undertake a responsive writing programme, in order to provide such support. This aspect of initiation, in relation to Bishop's model, demonstrates how the study was initiated together with someone who had cultural links with the students in my class. Prior to beginning the responsive writing programme, a letter was sent home to the parents of my students explaining that with their support I would like to involve their children in a responsive writing programme. If they objected to their child being a part of this programme, they were to contact me. Given that no objections were forthcoming, the responsive writing proceeded with the entire class.

Because I did not undertake study one as a formal research study but merely as an opportunity to more effectively support my students' classroom writing practice, I did not seek formal consent from the Principal or the Board of Trustees. In collaboration with the person who had given the advice to undertake the responsive writing, a potential adult responder was identified who had cultural links to many of my students. Although she was not located within the local community and the students at that stage had no knowledge of her, nor did she know them, her cultural links enabled the students to benefit from having a responder whom they could relate to, as rather than a person from a different cultural background. This addressed Bishop's model in terms of benefits. She agreed to become the responder for all students over the course of two terms. A pre writing assessment sample was taken from all

students. Students completed this writing sample on a separate piece of paper as a whole class assessment exercise. This sample was analysed following the procedure outlined for writing assessment, but it was not responded to. In order to make it manageable for the single responder, students were then assigned to two groups with similar numbers of students, with mixed abilities, gender and ethnicities in each group. They were termed group one and group two. A regular school 1B4 exercise book was purchased for each of the students to use for their weekly writing sample. This book was then used by the responder, to reply to each student beneath their individual writing samples.

Group one began first, they wrote to the responder each week on a Monday morning for ten weeks. This involved first reading through what the responder had written, as a response to their previous writing sample. They were given some time to share their responses with each other if they wished. They were then given the opportunity to talk with peers about how they were going to write back to the responder. As the teacher, I gave constant models of what they *could* say, for example their weekend experiences, questioning or responding to something the responder had written and also answering any questions she may have posed. However, I made it explicit to the students that it was absolutely their choice as to what they would write. In Bishop's model, this aspect of the study involves the elements of benefits, representation, legitimation and accountability. The students' voices were represented, and what they had written was totally accepted as legitimate. The students were themselves accountable as they had control of what knowledge they shared in their writing and because of this equal level of power-sharing between the participants, the students (as well as the responder) benefited.

Once the writing sample began, the students had exactly ten minutes to do their writing and they wrote without discussion and as independently as possible. They used a pencil as they did in their regular classroom programme. Once the ten minutes was up, the students replaced their pencil with a red or blue pen and were invited to edit their writing. They had five minutes to do this, again, independently and without discussion. The books were then collected up and that afternoon they were couriered to the responder who wrote to each student individually, responding to the messages in their writing. This exchange continued each week for ten weeks. Meanwhile,

Group two used this time to continue their regular classroom writing programme within the classroom. However, they were aware that their opportunity to write to the responder would come. After ten weeks, a post writing assessment sample was taken from group one and a second writing sample was taken from group two.

The following week, it was now group two's opportunity to undergo their responsive writing programme. The exact same procedure was carried out as for group one. This time it was group one that continued with their regular classroom writing programme. At the end of the ten weeks, a final *post-programme* writing assessment sample was taken again from all students in both groups. The entire class then invited the responder to come and spend a day with them in our classroom so that they could meet and talk to each other. Parents were also invited to come and meet the writing responder on this occasion. This was planned as an informal gathering which would provide a final coming together for all participants to meet each other and clarify any parts of the writing they may have been unsure about.

Study two: data collection and analysis

This study began in 2007, in the same school, with 16 Year three students, aged six and seven. I was approached by a university researcher, who had heard about the first study and hoped that he may be able to contribute to a second. He proposed a plan to involve a class of his university students enrolled in an educational research paper at post-graduate level who would act as the responders to the writing of the students in my class, again using the same responsive writing programme. Most of these university students had cultural links to my students. However, again at that stage responders and students were unknown to each other and responders were based outside the school's community. The researcher and I discussed the possible benefits for all participants, including the responders, my students, myself and others involved in the study. Following this discussion, we decided to undertake a formal research study. I approached my school Principal seeking consent, and in turn she consulted with the school Board of Trustees who gave me permission to carry out this study. As in Study one, a letter was sent home to the parents of the students requesting contact to be made if they objected to their child taking part in this responsive writing programme. This detailed what the study entailed and what it would be used for. Again, no objections were received from parents. In the initiation of this study I was

again seeking to work collaboratively with this community. I understood that the interests and needs of my students were paramount and greater collaboration with this community could bring benefits for all involved.

The assessment procedures for this study differed only slightly from that of Study one. Again, a regular school 1B4 exercise book was purchased for each of the students to write in, and for the responders to write back beneath the school students' weekly writing samples. The study began with the students writing a pre-writing or baseline sample in their books. The books were couriered to the responders who were allocated the books at random and thus identified their writing partners for the next ten weeks. Because there were slightly fewer writing responders than students, some responders had two students who they would respond to. The class continued to write to their responder each week on a Monday morning for ten weeks. Each week, once responses returned, students were given time to read through what their responder had written. At this point they were able to share their responses with each other if they wished. They were then given the opportunity to talk with peers about what their responder had said and how they were going to respond back. Again, I made suggestions about what they *could* say, for example I might suggest that they could write about their weekend experiences, they could ask a question or respond to something the responder had written and also they could answer any questions that their responder might have posed. However again, I made it explicit to my students that it was totally up to them as to what they would write. As discussed previously in study one above, elements of Bishop's model were evident here too. The students' voices alone were represented in their writing. What they wrote was totally accepted as legitimate. The students were accountable to themselves, as they had control over what they shared in their writing and how they shared their ideas. Because of this there was an equitable level of power-sharing between the participants. Finally, both the students as well as the writing responders (themselves students) benefited and gained something from the shared writing relationship.

As with Study one, the students had exactly ten minutes to do their writing independently and without discussion. They wrote in pencil, as in their normal classroom programme. Once the ten minutes were up, the students replaced their pencil with a red or blue pen and were invited to edit their writing for five minutes,

independently and without discussion. The books were then collected up and that afternoon, they were couriered back to the responders, who wrote to their same student/s, responding to the messages in their writing and connecting where possible, to similar personal experiences that they had shared. This exchange continued each week for ten weeks. After the ten weeks, the last writing sample was used as the *post-programme* or final writing measure. The analysis in Study two compared the first writing sample (*pre-programme*) with the last writing sample (*post-programme*). Again, to conclude the study, the responders and my students negotiated an opportunity to meet with each other. The responders travelled the 115km to spend a morning, and share food with the students they had been writing to. Parents were also invited to join us on this occasion.

Analysis of Writing Samples

The procedure carried out to analyse each piece of writing was generally consistent in both Study one and two. These assessment procedures were based on those described in the *Kia Puawai ai Te Reo* programme (Berryman et al., 2001). The difference occurred in the separate assessment writing samples gathered in Study one at pre-programme, mid and post-programme. Students were aware these writing samples were to be used for assessment purposes and not going to be responded to. These assessment writing samples were written on a separate piece of paper in contrast with Study two's pre and post samples which were simply the first and last samples from their responsive writing exercise book.

The procedure for the analysis of the samples was the same in both Study one and two. Photocopies were taken of each sample for this purpose. Firstly, the number of words written within the ten minute writing time was counted. This became the total number of words attempted. This count did not include words written in the red or blue pen during the five minutes editing time. Secondly, all of the errors were marked with a highlighter. The errors included:

1. Incorrect or omitted punctuation
2. Incorrect spelling
3. Words that were not recognisable English words
4. Unclear messages
5. Incorrect English language structures and tenses

If the student had an incorrect structure or unclear message it was counted as only one error, regardless of the number of words it may have contained. However, details of the number and types of errors were not disclosed to the students; this exercise was purely for use in the summative analysis of writing data for the results section of this thesis.

Once the errors had been highlighted, the number of errors was counted and then subtracted from the total number of words written in the first ten minutes. This process determined the total number of correct words written in the first ten minutes of the writing sample. Next, the correct number of words was divided by ten, to calculate the correct rate per minute. The incorrect rate per minute was then calculated by dividing the number of incorrect words by ten. This information was then used to calculate writing accuracy. Information was also collated in order to measure the increasing number of difficult challenging words that students were using in their writing. Spelling lists were used to identify the difficulty levels of words written, in terms of their rate of occurrence in student writing levels 1-3 (group 1), 4-6 (group 2), and level 7 words and beyond (Arvidson, 1970). The challenging words were those words that the students used from Level 4 and beyond (low frequency words).

Procedure for Assessment of Writing Quality

A measure to assess the quality of the students' writing was also used. This involved inviting an independent reader who was not involved as the teacher or the responder, to provide each writing assessment sample with separate ratings on a seven point scale of overall language fluency/competence and audience interest. These measures required the independent reader to decide first how enjoyable or entertaining the writing was for the reader (reader interest) and second, what skills the writer needed to think about or learn next in order for them to progress (language fluency/competence) (Berryman, et al., 2001). This process was undertaken by an experienced teacher who remained unaware of the order in which the writing samples had been written, or of the identity of the writer.

Process Measures (Treatment integrity)

Upon conclusion of both the 2005 and 2007 responsive written feedback programmes, I sought evidence within the responders' writing to show that the responders had been carrying out responsive written feedback correctly, incorporating the nine themes (speaking with the writer; personalising their responses; having shared similar experiences; identifying with the theme; enjoying the content; identifying with the characters; supporting the writer's efforts; having empathy with the writer and anticipating a theme developing) that Glynn, Jerram and Tuck describe as being characteristic of responsive written feedback (1986).

In addition, although the school students had not been trained in responsive written feedback, as the responders had, this analysis was also carried out on students' writing samples to look for any evidence of the occurrence of these nine themes. To do this, within each of the studies a random selection of exercise books from approximately 30% of the students was made. Within each of these books, three separate pieces of the student's writing were selected, one at the beginning, one in the middle and then the final sample. With the responders' writing the same was done, selecting their piece that immediately followed that of the student's.

Thus, from a total of 18 students' and 18 responders' writing samples, both in Study one and Study two, an analysis was made of the occurrence of the nine themes. These occurrences were tallied, and the percentage of occurrence within each theme was calculated in both student and responder writing.

Responder and Student Writing

For each of these studies, examples of responder and student writing samples were presented alongside these Treatment Integrity data to exemplify the responsive writing exchanges. These writing samples are presented including student errors, exactly as they appeared in the writing exchanges.

Data collection and analysis: Study one

In Study one, writing for assessment purposes took place at three separate times throughout the duration of the study. To commence the study a separate ten minute writing sample was gathered from each student, across both groups, prior to beginning

the responsive writing programme. This first writing sample provided a pre writing measure or baseline. A second writing sample was taken ten weeks later, when group one had undertaken ten weeks of responsive written feedback and group two had continued with their regular classroom writing programme. A third, post writing sample was taken a further ten weeks later after group two had been involved in the responsive writing study, and group one went back to their regular classroom writing programme. The quantitative data analysis in this thesis uses only students' pre and post-programme data. Because some of the students had moved schools and because others had not been present at all assessment points, pre-post data analysis was carried out on only 16 of the 22 initial participants.

Data collection and analysis: Study two

In Study two, analysis took place at two separate times throughout the duration of the study. To commence the study the first writing sample was taken from each student and analysed as a pre writing sample. This happened again at the end of the ten weeks after they had all been involved in the responsive writing study. Again, the results in the final writing sample or post sample were analysed to illustrate the gains the students had made between the pre and post samples, both as a result of the responsive written feedback and the regular classroom writing programme.

Qualitative Evidence

Qualitative evidence was also gathered by interviewing people who had been a part of Study one and Study two. The following four themes developed as a result of these interviews: the writing exchanges; reading and sharing the responses, benefits of the responsive written feedback; and meeting together at the end.

Narrative Inquiry

Narrative Inquiry is an important qualitative research method that I have used in this thesis. It has always been integral to the traditional cultural practices of many indigenous people for the maintenance and passing on of cultural knowledge (Berryman, 2008). Smith (1999) suggests it is no longer acceptable for indigenous people to have their stories defined and reconstructed in language and culture from a mainstream, traditional western style of research. Relationships between the researcher and the research participants now seek to maintain the integrity of the

researched while their own voice addresses issues of legitimacy and validity within this aspect of the research. Experiences are storied and re-storied co-constructively between the researcher and the research participants, to enable co-creation of new meanings and understandings (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999). It challenges the notion of researchers as experts by repositioning the relationship to be between the knower (the participant) and the not-knower (the researcher) (Bishop, 1996).

Narrative inquiry is defined by Bishop (1996), as a process with a series of interviews that are taped or transcribed. These transcripts are then used in further meetings between participants where the knowledge is jointly validated and further inquiries are able to be made. Thus the interviews become a mutually evolving written record of narration. The researcher attempts to develop what Heshusius (1994) describes as *participatory consciousness*, in which the researcher becomes involved in a “somatic, non-verbal quality of attention that necessitates letting go of the focus of self” (p15). The research participant has the power to omit, adapt and delete any parts of the narrative at any stage prior to the agreed date of publication, dealing with the issues and concerns in a manner that is of interest to the participant, and not necessarily the researcher. This response to inquiry develops into a co-constructed narrative of experience. The notion of revisiting and reconstructing the narrative in partnership is deployed by Bishop in the image of a spiral. Via repeatedly revisiting the narrative, autonomy of the research participant is maintained and as well, their aspirations are able to be addressed. It requires a shift in the relationship between those traditionally constituted as researchers with voice, and those traditionally constituted as the passive researched, without voice (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999). Narrative inquiry used in this way, recognises that people and their communities are a meaningful and important part of the research process, contesting the validity of traditional methods of research.

Interviews as Chat

Within narrative inquiry is a process termed interviews as chat. Interviews as chat are described as an open questioning technique. These questions are thus used to develop a *rich* picture from the participants’ perspective (Bishop, 1996). Interviews as chat involve being able to work within a broad discussion framework from which specific questions emerge naturally during the chat. The broad discussion framework to be used can be fully discussed with participants and provided in an information sheet

well prior to any chat beginning. Within this framework the precise nature of the questions to be asked are not determined in advance, but depend on the way that the chat develops. This method emphasises a collaborative approach whereby power-sharing occurs in which ownership and benefits of the project belong to the research participant (Berryman, 2008).

Talking with student writers

At the time each of the studies was undertaken, I spoke with several participating students in order to get a better understanding of their experiences within the study. These conversations were taped and transcribed. A letter was sent home to the parents of these students explaining to them this interview process and asking them to contact me should they require further information or if they objected to their child being a part of this. No objections were made so I proceeded with the conversations. The broad discussion framework involved the following three general questions:

1. What did you like about the responsive writing?
2. What, if anything, didn't you like?
3. Did you learn anything from it, if so, what?

Talking with adult responders

After Study one was completed, I spoke with the writing responder, in an interview as chat in order to gain a better understanding of how she perceived her involvement within the study. I spoke also with one of the responders on completion of Study two. I made a personal approach and explained the intention of my work and invited them to participate.

The broad discussion framework involved the following themes:

1. Their part in the study and why they agreed to be part of it in the first place;
2. The participation of the student/s they responded to in this study;
3. How they believed the study was carried out;
4. How they believed the student/s benefited from this study;
5. What they understand to be the long-term results of this study for themselves and the students with whom they participated;
6. Who else they think might benefit from a similar programme and any recommendations that they would make.

It was made clear to the adult responders that should the line of questioning develop in such a way that they felt hesitant or uncomfortable, they would be reminded of their right to decline to answer any particular question or questions. Responders were reminded also of their right to withdraw sections of their tape from the transcript or to withdraw from the study at any time with no disadvantage to themselves of any kind.

Speaking with both the students and the responders allowed me to obtain a better understanding of their different perceptions and experiences within each of these studies. Students' names have not been disclosed. However, the responders whom I interviewed from the two studies both asked for their real names to be used within this thesis.

As mentioned earlier, this thesis involves a retrospective study working with existing data. This means that writing responder interviews were limited to only one responder from each study. Responders were chosen on the basis of their cultural match to the students participating in the studies. The responder in Study one was of Samoan and Māori descent, while the responder in Study two was of Samoan descent. As noted earlier, many of the students in both studies had Māori or Samoan backgrounds.

Chapter 3: Results from Study One (2005)

Introduction

This chapter examines the data from the first of two studies and presents the results across three sections. The first section presents the process measures, the second section the outcome measures and the last section presents narratives detailing some of the experiences of the participants themselves. These narratives include voices from the groups of students and a responder who participated, as well as that of myself in my role as the teacher.

Process Measures

Before student outcome data from this responsive written feedback study is presented, it is important to demonstrate the extent to which this treatment was being undertaken with integrity, or in other words, that the responsive writing procedures were being correctly implemented by the responder. In order to conduct this exercise, the frequency of occurrence of the nine themes as identified by Glynn, Jerram and Tuck (1986) was assessed within both the responder's writing and the students' writing. The responsive written feedback themes are:

1. speaking with the writer;
2. personalising their responses;
3. sharing similar experiences;
4. identifying with the theme;
5. enjoying the content;
6. identifying with the characters;
7. supporting the writer's efforts;
8. having empathy with the writer;
9. anticipating a theme developing.

The frequency to which each of these themes were present or absent within a total of 30% of the responder's and students' writing samples was established. The 30% sample of writing was made up by selecting 30% of students' responsive writing books at random, and selecting from this selection of books, a beginning, middle and end writing sample (approximately 30% of the writing samples in each book). Table 3.1 therefore, presents treatment integrity data that demonstrate the incidence of each

of the nine themes in both the responder's (listed in the second column), and students' writing (listed in the third column).

Table 3.1

Incidence of nine responsive writing themes in responder and student feedback

| Themes | Responder incidence | Student incidence |
|-------------------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Speaking with the writer | 100% | 61% |
| Personalising their responses | 100% | 94% |
| Having shared similar experiences | 61% | 17% |
| Identifying with the writer's theme | 94% | 39% |
| Enjoying the content | 100% | 11% |
| Identifying with the characters | 100% | 28% |
| Supporting the writer's efforts | 100% | 22% |
| Having empathy with the writer | 61% | 22% |
| Anticipating a theme developing | 83% | 22% |

The responder's writing showed a very high level of five out of the nine themes within the writing sampled, namely, 'speaking with the writer'; 'personalising their responses'; 'enjoying the content'; 'identifying with the characters' and 'supporting the writer's efforts' (all 100%). Similarly, the responder displayed a high level of 'identifying with the writer's theme' (94%). 'Anticipating a theme developing' also rated reasonably high, in 83% of the writing sampled. 'Having shared similar experiences' and 'having empathy with the writer' were evident in 61% of the total writing that was sampled. The high level of treatment integrity is not surprising given that this was an experienced responder who had participated in two previous responsive writing studies and who responded to all students throughout this study.

Given that the students had not received any specific training or any specific instruction to carry out the responsive written feedback, the responsive writing themes in the students' writing samples were, not surprisingly, occurring at much lower

levels. However, 'personalising their responses' rated the highest amongst them (94%). Showing 'enjoyment of the content' rated the lowest occurrence in 11% of the samples. 'Speaking with the writer' occurred in 61% of samples and 'identifying with the theme' in 39% of samples. 'Identifying with the characters' occurred in 28% of samples, whilst three of the themes occurred in 22% of the writing samples ('supporting the writer's efforts'; 'having empathy with the writer' and 'anticipating a theme developing'). The theme 'having shared similar experiences' occurred in just 17% of the students' writing samples. Examples of each of the themes that the students and responders used are shown in Table 3.2 next. Note that students' names have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

Table 3.2

Examples of responsive writing themes

| Themes | Responder examples | Student examples |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Speaking with the writer | <i>I see that you may be a fan of Ciara. Yeah I think she is pretty cool myself. I understand that she is only the age of 17, is that right?</i> | <i>Oh well its time to go. I will wait until the next story. I am going to share my news with you.</i> |
| Personalising their responses | <i>Kia orana Tamati, My name is Silomiga and I am 29 years old. I live in Mount Maunganui. I am of Samoan, Māori and European descent.</i> | <i>Faka lofo lahi atu Silomiga, thank you for sharing your story with me. Bye Silomiga.</i> |
| Having shared similar experiences | <i>I played soccer for a little while when I was at school too. We used to have a big feed after church every Sunday too and it was guaranteed that chop suey, chow mein, green bananas and taro would be on the table.</i> | <i>Is your birthday on October the 25th? It was my Uncle birthday on the 20th of June. Soon it going to be my birthday. We have chow mein at my church too.</i> |
| Identifying with the theme | <i>How cool was that, that the man at church shared with everyone that it was going to be your birthday on Friday.</i> | <i>I am glad that she was happy again. My whanau is very proud of me, I will keep up the good work.</i> |
| Enjoying the content | <i>Like your style of writing. It sounds like it would have been a 'primo' day. Myself, I guess I would have a lot of fun at the disco.</i> | <i>I like writing story to you because it is fun. I like lollies too.</i> |
| Identifying with the characters | <i>It is good to hear that you will be getting a reward for being good. Everybody likes to be recognised when they have done something good for someone else.</i> | <i>Your niece's and nephew's names are nice and cool. Are you and your nieces still close? My nephew and I are close.</i> |
| Supporting the writer's efforts | <i>Thank you for sharing with me your story about yourself, I look forward to the next one. Keep trying with your spelling, give it a go and don't give up.</i> | <i>I like your story that you write to me. Thank you for your lovely story. Thank you for sharing your news with me.</i> |
| Having empathy with the writer | <i>Sometimes its better just to try and act nice or normal when someone is being mean to you. When they see that you are not being mean, it can make them give up on being mean to you.</i> | <i>I'm sorry that the flood happen in Tauranga. Your friend must of been sad when her car wouldn't go. Your brother must have been happy when he had a baby.</i> |
| Anticipating a theme developing | <i>I hope you had a good day, what sort of presents did you receive? Apparently Daniel Carter played a primo game, is that correct?</i> | <i>Was it fun watching the movie? Did you watched rugby and did you know who wonned? What drink do you like?</i> |

In the examples presented in Table 3.2 it is evident in the first row that the responder was indeed *speaking with the writer*, responding to ideas they had put forward and taking their ideas further. In the student column, it is evident that the student is doing likewise, indicating that although it was time to finish they were already looking forward to the next time they would be writing to their responder. On the second row the responder is clearly *personalising the writer* through the use of her name and telling the student personal details about herself. In the student column, the student is greeting the responder in her own first language, in a context where that student may have felt that her language was valid, and normal. The third row, *sharing similar experiences*, presents two examples of the responder telling of similar experiences she has had, to that of her students. The students respond to Silomiga's experiences: the first student, by elaborating on the information she gave them about birthdays; the second by connecting with Silomiga through their similar experiences of church. In the fourth row, the responder expresses her joy about an upcoming event in a student's writing, and the students have clearly identified and *engaged with the theme* the responder has mentioned and responded to this as appropriate. In theme five, *enjoying the content*, the responder tells the student what an enjoyable time she would have at a disco. In the student column, one student expresses the amount of fun he has writing to Silomiga, whilst another student agrees with the responder's likes (of lollies). On the sixth row, the responder has *identified with the character* by expressing empathy with being good and getting rewarded while in the student column, the student has also identified with characters in the responder's writing and elaborated on this. *Supporting the writer's efforts*, the seventh theme, provides specific feedback from the responder to the student about how they have done this and likewise, the students extend their gratitude to the responder about her writing to them. In the eighth row, the responder has expressed *empathy* for the student as well as given some practical advice. The students have given statements of empathy that respond to parts in the responder's texts. The final row, *anticipating a theme developing*, provides examples from both the responder and the students of questions they have posed relating to parts of the previous response.

The data from both Table 3.1 and Table 3.2 indicate that the responder had carried out the responsive written feedback strategy successfully and that students were receiving feedback responsive to the content of their writing, rather than feedback on errors. No

instances of corrective feedback were noted in any of the writing samples selected for this analysis. The data also indicate instances where the students were using each of the themes even though they had not been specifically trained to do so. These examples also demonstrate how students, whose first language was not English, felt able to use either their first language comfortably, or their second language (English), when greeting their responder. The responder regularly greeted the students in their first language also. This context provided an important opportunity for students to use their first language where it was accepted as ‘normal’.

In order to gain a richer picture of what the responsive written feedback looked like in Study one, figure 3.1 and 3.2 below show two full samples of responsive written feedback from Silomiga, the responder, to two different students. Students’ writing samples have been copied exactly and show their editing attempts in blue. Again, names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Figure 3.1

Writing Sample 4 (out of 9) between Silomiga and Sarah

Tena koe Sarah,

Thank you for sharing with me your story about what you got up to in the weekend. How old is your nephew? I remember I was an Aunty for the first time when I was 16. My niece's name is Natasha and her and I are pretty close. I would look after her when I came back from school and we would do all sorts of things. Sometimes go to the park, shop for lollies, or just play games at home.

Like your nephew BJ, my niece Natasha loved spinning around. Even I would get really dizzy from all the spinning around. Kids love it.

*Well done Sarah, keep up the good work. Until the next story,
Soli*

Tena koe Soli,

Thaky for sharing your new with me. When you asks me plaitly how old is my nephew he is only 6 moths. I play with him a lot. ~~WL~~ We a close but my sister is closer then me. A you and your niec's stal cloese. How old is your nies niec's. I stpoa him alot becuase he is cute and ~~spie~~specil to me.

Figure 3.2

Writing Sample 7 (out of 9) between Silomiga and Indigo

Malo Indigo,

Thank you for sharing with me your story. Yes I hear that you have a new mouse in your classroom. All the kids this week have written about Rosie so I can see that she is very popular.

I hope you have a primo time at the disco on Friday. It seems that quite a few of the other kids are pretty excited about it too.

I hope you do well in the cross country. That's cool that you enjoy running. When I was your age I didn't. I suppose it made it difficult seeing I was a bit overweight.

*Hope you have a good week Indigo, you are doing so well with your writing. Until the next one,
Soli*

Malo Soli,

On Wednesday it was cross country and when we got on the field I was ~~never~~ nervous and a little bit scared.

When it was our turn I was scared because I thought I will come last. But guess what? I came first in cross country.

Then I had some ~~yummy~~ yummy popcorn, chips, mosie and that's all.

After that we had pize skiveing and I got an award I was glad that I came first.

Although the first writer is less fluent than the second, the messages contained within both pieces of writing are still very clear. Both students are writing about authentic events, events that are important to them. Both students were using a range of words, including some very challenging words, for example *nervous*; *nephew*. There is evidence of the students' attempts to edit their writing, in order for a clearer picture to be made for the reader.

Outcome Measures

A pre writing assessment sample was taken from all students. This was undertaken as a class activity with students writing at the same time on their own separate piece of paper. This sample was analysed following the procedure outlined in the method for analysing the writing assessment sample. Students understood that this sample would not be responded to rather it was intended for assessment purposes alone. As a result of these writing assessments students were split into two similarly matched groups for the responsive writing. Each group had similar numbers of students, with the same range of mixed abilities, gender and ethnicities. These groups were termed group one and group two. To make the task of responding to such a large number of students more manageable for the single responder, each group carried out the responsive writing over separate terms.

Table 3.3 presents the analysis of the students' writing for these two groups of students. Five different quantitative measures were taken. These were: the total number of words attempted in the ten minutes of writing (*Total words attempted*); the total number of challenging words (words in level 4 and above on the Arvidson's Levels list) attempted that were correct (*Correct challenging words*) and the percentage of writing accuracy (*Accuracy*). Two qualitative measures were taken. These were a rating of interest to the reader, earning a score out of 7 with 7 being the highest (*Interest*) and a rating of overall language fluency, earning a score out of 7 with 7 being the highest (*Fluency*). Data columns represent measures taken prior to the responsive writing programme starting, and again following ten weeks of the programme when the post sample was carried out. Group one received their responsive writing programme first, and then in the following term group two received their responsive writing programme. For both groups, students' pre writing scores are compared with their own post writing scores.

Table 3.3**Pre and Post Writing Measures for students in Group one and Group two**

| QUANTITATIVE WRITING MEASURES: STUDY ONE 2005 | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------|-------|---------|-----------------|
| MEASURE: TOTAL WORDS ATTEMPTED | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Group One (n=6) | 60.5 | 73.5 | 0.64 | 0.28 |
| Group Two (n=10) | 53.9 | 55.4 | 0.92 | 0.05 |
| MEASURE: CORRECT CHALLENGING WORDS | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Group One (n=6) | 14 | 25.67 | 0.22 | 0.75 |
| Group Two (n=10) | 11.7 | 19.8 | 0.19 | 0.61 |
| MEASURE: ACCURACY | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Group One (n=6) | 86.35 | 91.76 | 0.13 | 0.96 |
| Group Two (n=10) | 82.23 | 84.92 | 0.58 | 0.25 |
| QUALITATIVE WRITING MEASURES: STUDY ONE 2005 | | | | |
| MEASURE: INTEREST | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Group One (n=6) | 3.83 | 5.33 | <0.01 | 2.32 |
| Group Two (n=10) | 3.7 | 4.6 | 0.08 | 0.84 |
| MEASURE: FLUENCY | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Group One (n=6) | 3.67 | 5 | 0.01 | 1.82 |
| Group Two (n=10) | 3.6 | 4.5 | 0.08 | 0.83 |

n = number of participants; M = Mean of items; p = probability of the difference between means; d = the effect size.

The quantitative writing measures for the six students in Group one and the ten students in Group two appear in column one of Table 3.3. In column two are the pre-programme assessment scores and in column three are the post-programme assessment scores. In column four are the P values from the statistical analysis that

were carried out on the differences between means on these data. Although P values were calculated for every pre and post difference, because of the very small sample sizes and high variability within the groups of students, the effect size measure, in the fifth column, provides a more useful indication of the strength of the pre-post differences between means.

Quantitative Measures

In a recent meta-analysis on achievement, synthesising more than 800 studies, Hattie (in publication) has estimated strength of the yearly effect of maturation and class programme, in English medium in reading, mathematics and writing from Years 4 to 13, would be represented by an effect size of 0.35. Although these students were in Years three and four it is interesting to that eight of the ten effect sizes in Table 3.3 exceed 0.35. It is also important to note that these significant effect sizes have appeared after only ten weeks of the responsive writing strategy being implemented (combined with the existing class writing programme) after a full school year.

From these data it is evident that:

1. Both groups attempted to write more words in the post-sample, with Group one showing a particularly impressive increase in the total number of words attempted (Group one shifted from 60.5 to 73.5; Group two shifted from 53.9 to 55.4). Both groups show a smaller effect size than Hattie's (in publication) 0.35 average (Group one 0.28 and Group two 0.05). However, it is important to note that any increase in itself is noteworthy because the total number of words written in ten minutes was already high in the pre-assessment data, given that students were writing on a familiar writing topic, writing about themselves.
2. In addition, both groups showed a large increase in the number of correct challenging words (Group one shifted from 14 to 25.67; Group two shifted from 11.7 to 19.8). Both effect sizes for this measure are well above 0.35, Group one having an effect size of 0.75 and Group two 0.61.
3. Students in both Groups improved their levels of accuracy between pre and post assessment samples (Group one from 86.35% to 91.76% and Group two 82.23% to 84.92%). Although Group two's effect size is a lot smaller than

Group one's (Group one's being 0.96 and Group two's 0.25), again it is still important to note that gains in accuracy were still made within both groups, even though pre-programme measures were already high (both above 82%).

Qualitative Measures

The qualitative shifts in audience interest and language fluency (rated by the independent reader) on a scale of one to seven, with seven being the highest. Both measures of audience interest and language fluency for both Group one and Group two increased markedly between pre and post assessment samples, and appear even stronger than the quantitative measures. In terms of ratings of audience interest, Group one shifted from 3.83 to 5.33, with a very strong effect size of 2.32, while Group two shifted from 3.7 to 4.6, with a lower, but still strong effect size of 0.84. On the measure of language fluency, Group one shifted from 3.67 to 5, with a very strong effect size of 1.82, and Group two shifted from 3.6 to 4.5, with a strong effect size of 0.83. Even though these students had experienced only between eight and ten writing exchanges, the effect sizes for these qualitative measures were all well above the effect size of 0.35 identified by Hattie as representing a year's progress in reading and writing in English medium. In particular, Group one's measure of audience interest had a very strong effect size of 2.32.

Overall Effect Size

An overall analysis was separately carried out of these quantitative and qualitative data. The analysis revealed that Group One (n=6) had an average effect size of 0.66 on quantitative measures and average effect size of 2.07 on qualitative measures. Group Two (n=10) had an average effect size of 0.30 on quantitative measures and an average effect size of 0.84 on qualitative measures. All of the effect sizes exceed 0.35, except for Group two's qualitative average effect size, being slightly lower (0.30).

Outcomes for students' learning: English as a second language

Given that a group of these students were learning English as a second language I saw an important opportunity to identify what effect the ten weeks of responsive writing had had on this group's writing in English. In order to do this, the data from Group one and Group two students were re-analysed to compare pre and post results for the students whose second language was English (L2) with students whose first language

was English (L1). These data appear in Table 3.4 below, and can be compared with the data in Table 3.3 (all students).

Table 3.4

Pre and Post Writing Measures of Second Language Learners of English

| QUANTITATIVE WRITING MEASURES: STUDY ONE 2005 | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------|
| MEASURE: TOTAL WORDS ATTEMPTED | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 55.13 | 58 | 0.9 | 0.06 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 57.63 | 66.38 | 0.57 | 0.29 |
| MEASURE: CORRECT CHALLENGING WORDS | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 11.38 | 19.5 | 0.3 | 0.54 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 13.75 | 24.38 | 0.12 | 0.83 |
| MEASURE: ACCURACY | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 81.41 | 85.99 | 0.45 | 0.39 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 86.14 | 88.98 | 0.38 | 0.45 |
| QUALITATIVE WRITING MEASURES: STUDY ONE 2005 | | | | |
| MEASURE: INTEREST | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 3.38 | 4.5 | 0.05 | 1.05 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 4.13 | 5.25 | 0.01 | 1.66 |
| MEASURE: FLUENCY | PRE | POST | p value | d (effect size) |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 3.38 | 4.25 | 0.1 | 0.89 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 3.88 | 5.13 | 0.01 | 1.51 |

n = number of participants; *M* = Mean of items; *p* = probability of the difference between means; *d* = the effect size.

Table 3.4 shows the progress made by the eight students who were learning English as a second language (L2) in both Group one and Group two, in comparison with their

eight peers whose first language was English (L1). The data in Table 3.4 are arranged in the same order as the previous table, Table 3.3.

Quantitative Measures

Firstly, the total number of words attempted increased for both groups although L1 students showed a larger increase (from 57.63 to 66.38) than that of their L2 learning counterparts (from 55.13 to 58). Although the effect sizes for both groups are weak it is important to note that there was little opportunity for students to write more because the pre assessment samples show they were already writing high numbers of words and may have been operating at or near the ceiling for words written in ten minutes. However, both groups increased their number of correct challenging words. L1 students on average achieved more (an average difference of 10.63 correct challenging words for L1; an average difference of 8.12 correct challenging words for L2). Effect sizes for both groups were greater than 0.35 (0.54 and 0.83 respectively). Levels of accuracy for both groups of students increased between pre and post assessment samples (L2 from 81.41 to 85.99 and L1 from 86.14 to 88.98). The effect sizes for both groups were well above 0.35.

Qualitative Measures

Again, independent ratings on the seven point scales of audience interest and language fluency between pre and post assessment samples for both groups show consistent increases (L2 from 3.38 to 4.5 for interest and 3.38 to 4.25 for fluency; L1 from 4.13 to 5.25 for interest and 3.88 to 5.13 for fluency). The effect sizes were very strong. L2's effect sizes were 1.05 for interest and 0.89 for fluency and L1's effect sizes were 1.66 and 1.51 respectively. These gains in qualitative measures are important when compared alongside the quantitative measures. They show how the quality of the students' writing was more strongly influenced by responsive written feedback than the quantity or the amount of writing that was being completed (although the possibility of a quantitative ceiling effect has been noted).

Overall Effect Size

L2 students (n=8) had an average effect size on quantitative measures of 0.50 and on qualitative measures 0.23, and L1 students (n=8) had an average effect size on quantitative measures of 0.28 and on qualitative measures, 0.16. While only one measure exceeded 0.35, it is reassuring to note the important benefits from responsive

written feedback occurred for both L2 and L1 students. L2 students benefited strongly from responsive written feedback, despite their level of writing in English being well below that of L1 students. A picture of what these changes look like in the written text of a student who is a second language learner, over pre, mid and post measures, can be found by looking at appendices one to three.

Narratives of Experience

In the next section, the experiences of the three key participant groups who took part in the study are presented. These participant groups were the students, the responder, and me, as the teacher who facilitated the running of this study within my own classroom programme. This section is organised around a series of themes. These themes arose from the voices of the participants themselves from within the ‘interviews as chat’ process. These four themes are:

1. writing the stories;
2. receiving and reading/sharing the writing;
3. benefiting from of the responsive writing and;
4. meeting together at the conclusion of the responsive writing programme.

Theme 1: Writing the stories

Theme one explores both the responder’s and the students’ thoughts on their experiences of writing their stories to each other. I, as the teacher, also share my thoughts around this aspect of the programme.

First, the responder explains what she understood of the process. Silomiga, who has asked that her real name be used in this thesis, is an experienced responder who has participated in the capacity of responder in at least two other studies.

Silomiga: Yeah so the kids would write to me. We would do it [write] once a week. Our turn-round was to be once a week and they would write to me, and I would write back to them. But the idea [in responsive writing] was not to correct their writing, it was to model it to them within the sentences I wrote to them. For example if they spelt ice cream wrong, I would have a sentence that had something to do with ice cream so I could show them how it was spelt properly.

The effect of non-directed modelling of correct spelling by the responder was also picked up by many of the students, and may certainly have had an impact upon the students' abilities to write challenging words with increasing correctness. These improvements are shown in the quantitative writing outcomes.

The other one was just to like build a rapport with them and just to share my experiences and in turn they'd share their experiences with me. For example, oh this is from another school, in Waioweka, the kids would do a lot of horse riding and they'd talk about it in their stories. Now I've only ridden a horse probably once or twice, but I told them about my experience about riding a horse! Yeah it was alright. And that was pretty much it, oh and just to encourage them that they can do it and yeah just encouragement in their writing.

When the students were asked what they thought about writing stories for responsive writing, one student said:

It was like, the most interesting thing in that year. 'Cause like the other stuff, I had to just write it down. But when Soli wrote back to me, that, that helped me a lot. When I wrote to her, like questions, she... she answers them like, straight away, like when she brings the reply.

Other students talked of the importance of having someone to share their experiences with, through their story writing:

I liked um, telling her how fun my weekend and my holidays were. It was nice telling her about me so she knows what I like and what I do.

Um, she tells us all the details how she... um, when we write to her she tells us all the details about her and herself and then she sends pictures to us, and then we write back to her and she gives us more information about herself.

Silomiga also spoke about the opportunity to make connections with the students through their writing in order to make writing an authentic task and also a positive experience for these students. Part of this involved sharing about herself and her own family but also it was about being able to greet them in their home languages:

Silomiga: Oh, they'd ask me do I have a daughter and I would talk about Karamea and they asked if she went to school and I would say she went to day care and um what else, oh, I'd always greet them in their...oh, like if they were Tongan I'd always start my sentence off with Malo e lelei or if they were Niuen I would say it in Niuen, I can't remember what it was.

Silomiga suggests that being able to connect at a cultural level, may have helped her to connect with these students:

Being of Samoan nationality my self [may have helped], so identifying a little bit with the Pacific island students in your class.

However, Silomiga also suggested that being able to connect with these students was also about personalising their writing to them as individuals and also about providing them with lots of encouraging feedback.

Yeah I guess trying to personalise the stories for them as well, make them individual. I don't know... make them feel special. Enjoy writing to them, positive comments, heaps of encouragement.

For me as the teacher, I think the responsive writing gave the students a real purpose for their writing. It wasn't just me going to read their writing, or their peer, but someone else who showed that they cared about what they had to say. The students had to really think about what the responder would want to read. I think this helped them to become aware of writing for an audience as well as assisting them with their editing skills, amongst other specific features involved in the art of writing.

Theme two: Receiving and reading/sharing the writing

Theme two presents what the students and the responder thought of the experiences of reading each other's writing on a weekly basis. This theme also includes the students' thoughts about receiving the writing and having the opportunity to share with each other what the responder had written each week. I talk about my experiences around this in terms of how I perceived it more as an onlooker in the handing back of the books and then facilitating and observing the writing process, but at the same time,

being able to also read what both the responder and students had written to one another.

Silomiga talked about the importance of getting the writing responded to and back in a timely manner and on a regular basis in order not to disappoint the students. Given that she was writing to up to 10 students at any one time, this was no small task.

And if the turn-over could be kept ...regular, you know how we did it, how we were always persistent. I know that I finished writing it, the day that I got them, if I didn't do them that same day I'd have to get them done the next day. Just to keep the flow going. 'Cause from what I've heard the kids were really excited about getting their books back. But I mean who doesn't get excited from getting a letter or something in the mail? Better than bills! If you could just try and keep that week-turn-over and not get slack 'cause I think that could dishearten the kids. They're waiting, they're waiting... 'Yeah, so-and-so is going to write our letters this week' and ah if it doesn't turn up then...

The students spoke of their appreciation and the enjoyment that they got from the process:

I liked getting the reply back from her [Silomiga]. Um, how she like, told me about her, like about herself.

Well I enjoyed that she always writes back to us because like, when we write about our weekend, she sends in pictures and [writes] about herself as well.

Silomiga also talked about the difference she noticed in the quality and quantity of the students' writing that had made the process worthwhile for her.

You know-the little bit of writing at the beginning ...was it 10 weeks? But at the end of the ten weeks, yeah definitely more writing and some of, I noticed with the girls, more so the girls than the boys, were more up-front more...writing and use of more words. Maybe 'cause I was a girl too, they could relate to me more, I'm not too sure.

For me as the teacher it was so satisfying to see the excitement on my students' faces when I announced each week *'the books have arrived!'* It was a difficult task

choosing who was going to be the lucky one to run up to the school office to collect the courier bag each Monday morning. They also had the pleasure of ripping open the bag and distributing the books. I could feel a strong sense of anticipation in the room as the students raced to open and read what the responder had written. Although my less-skilled readers struggled to read it all, this did not deter them from the task and they willingly sought help from either a peer or myself. As my students read, I watched how they shared with each other, spontaneously and excitedly, about the parts they were enjoying. I too was interested to read what both the responder and the students were writing, and the sophisticated way in which some of my students began responding to Silomiga, as the programme progressed. The way in which they talked about their writing to each other and then within their writing samples, demonstrated for me the degree to which my students comprehended what they were doing.

Theme three: Benefits of the responsive writing

Theme three outlines what the students, the responder and my self as the teacher perceived the benefits of the responsive written feedback programme to be.

For these students, the thoughts are perhaps best encapsulated by the student above who said that the responsive writing was, *'like, the most interesting thing in that year.'* Another student said:

It's like I just had a new friend. I loved every bit.

Other students would agree. However, the students below talked also about the benefits of learning about their attitude to writing and about the writing process itself:

It, it told me to like, keep on going and never give up.

I pretty much enjoyed the whole thing. It helped me um, it helped me, um...when to, how to write about my weekends.

Silomiga talked about how she hoped that the responsive writing would benefit the students' self esteem:

How would I believe the students would benefit from the writing project is not only their literacy skills, their writing skills like spelling and writing and

sentence structure, but as you pointed out before it was their self-esteem, just believing in themselves that they can do it. That was pretty much it that yeah that they could believe in themselves. I do think the long term results is that, oh for the students anyway, yeah believing in themselves, that they can do it, can overcome obstacles.

Silomiga also talked about the benefits for herself:

The benefits for my self yeah, just to know that you've helped, played a part in helping a kid with their learning or writing. The benefits for my self would be just to know that I've played a part in helping a kid with their learning or writing. I just think it's really cool that you can... I don't know, make a kid feel special and they just thrive on it. Yeah I enjoy writing to them, positive comments, heaps of encouragement, and it's amazing what they can do from there.

From my perspective as the teacher the benefits were extensive. They gave me another insight into how my students learned, in terms of how they comprehended the text and how they responded to the writing each week, as well as insight into them as individual people; what they liked, didn't like, what their lives were like outside of school. In addition, responsive written feedback added value to my existing written language programme, and provided another perspective from which students were able to write and express their ideas. I think it provided the students with a boost of self esteem, and as the responder encouraged them each week it also gave them a greater sense of pride. I believe that because the responder had both a Māori and Pasifika background, like most of my students, the students felt an extra connection. They may not have felt this if the responder had been of a different ethnicity to them. I realised that although I could be responsive to their cultural background by listening and learning from them, I was not of their cultural background therefore that depth of cultural connection was something I could not give them as their teacher.

Theme four: Meeting together at the end

Theme four, meeting together at the end, reports the experiences of the students, responder and me as the teacher in terms of the day that the responder came to their classroom to meet all of the students, face to face, for the very first time.

Silomiga talked about how fantastic the day was, for a class of children she had never actually met:

Yeah it was, it was pretty cool how, even though the kids didn't know me. Did they see a picture of me before they met me? That was the coolest day man. And I noticed that when I did it with the other school too it was the same sort of thing. We built up a relationship and when I met them those kids were really cool too, at Waioweka. But those Christmas cards they were the coolest.

One student also talked about how Silomiga would know things about them although she had not met them previously:

When she comes over she'll know, like she'll know like, who we are and what we like.

As the teacher I think all the students thoroughly enjoyed the day that the writing responder came to visit. She brought her two and a half year old daughter with her, someone she had often talked about in her writing. It was a nice surprise to see her, and the students loved interacting with her and taking turns at 'taking her under their wing'. The responder also brought a colleague with her, who had been reading the students' writing each week also and had analysed some of the writing assessment samples that had been gathered. My students, their parents and I prepared a shared lunch for our visitors, as well as performing a number of culturally significant songs and dances for them, in which at times they even joined in! I especially enjoyed participating in these cultural dances and songs, on their terms with them being 'the experts', while I was the 'learner'. Parents were also invited to join us on this occasion and I think for the eight parents who attended they did enjoy themselves. The day turned out to be a satisfying finale to a successful study, in which all participants appeared to have really enjoyed themselves. It was affirming to hear the students talking to Silomiga, her daughter and her colleague, often referring to pieces they had written in their writing responses.

The voices of Silomiga and the students and this coming together at the end of the study highlighted the importance of the elements within Bishop's (1996) model of power sharing (initiation; benefits; representation; legitimation; and accountability) in the way in which this event was played out. As previously mentioned although the

students and their parents did not initiate this study, no parents objected to their children participating in the responsive writing study and the positive manner in which parents participated in the meeting at the conclusion of the study indicated that they showed their support for what we had achieved. Parents brought their authority to the study through their support and participation on this day in terms of preparation of food for the shared lunch and joining us in the meeting. They were also aware of the responsive writing exchanges that had been happening with their children and were interested in reading their child's writing and reading Silomiga's responses.

Once the responsive writing began the students' voices were represented throughout the writing exchanges in what they had written, the messages, including their errors, were all seen as totally legitimate within the writing exchanges to Silomiga. Students took responsibility for their writing and as such were accountable to their responder through the weekly writing exchanges. They had control over what knowledge they shared in their writing and because of this power-sharing between the students and the responder they all benefited. On this day students went out of their way to perform songs important to their culture and again shared with Silomiga what was significant to their identity as students and as learners in their communities, in this class and in this study.

Chapter 4: Results from Study Two (2007)

Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from the second of two responsive written feedback studies. Again, the results from this study are presented separately in three sections: the process measures; the outcome measures and narratives of the experiences of the participants themselves. These narratives include voices from the group of students and responders who participated as well as that of my self as the teacher.

Process Measures

As with Study one, I first intend to show that the writing procedures were correctly implemented by the responders. In this study there were 14 different responders, and so it was important to examine responses from different responders. Consequently this analysis draws on samples from five responders. Table 4.1 presents the extent to which each of the nine responsive written feedback themes (Glynn, Jerram, & Tuck, 1986) appeared in both the responders' and students' writing. The same treatment integrity measures were taken as in Study one to identify the frequency to which each of these themes were present or absent, within a total of 30% of the responders' and students' writing samples. Again, the 30% of samples of writing was obtained by selecting 30% of students' responsive writing books at random, and selecting a beginning, middle and end writing sample within those, and by selecting the responder's writing which immediately followed that of the student's. As previously noted, the nine themes identified are: speaking with the writer; personalising their responses; having shared similar experiences, identifying with the theme; enjoying the content; identifying with the characters, supporting the writer's efforts; having empathy with the writer; and anticipating a theme developing.

Table 4.1
Incidence of nine responsive writing themes in responder and student feedback

| Themes | Responders incidence % | Students incidence % |
|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Speaking with the writer | 100% | 40% |
| Personalising their responses | 100% | 60% |
| Having shared similar experiences | 75% | 13% |
| Identifying with the theme | 87% | 20% |
| Enjoying the content | 80% | 7% |
| Identifying with the characters | 80% | 13% |
| Supporting the writer's efforts | 40% | 0% |
| Having empathy with the writer | 27% | 7% |
| Anticipating a theme developing | 40% | 7% |

The responders' writing samples showed that six out of the nine themes were occurring frequently. Both 'speaking with the writer' and 'personalising their experiences' were seen in 100% of the responsive writing sampled. The responders displayed a high level of 'identifying with the theme', 'enjoying the content' and 'identifying with the characters' (87%, 80% and 80% respectively). Similarly, 'having shared similar experiences' occurred in 75% of the writing sampled. However, only 40% of the responders' writing sampled showed evidence of the themes 'supporting the writer's efforts' and 'anticipating a theme developing'. 'Having empathy with the writer' was seen the least, in only 27% of the writing sampled.

The lower occurrence of the responsive writing themes within the students' writing that was sampled is to be expected as the students were not trained in the responsive writing process. However, it is interesting to see that some of the themes occurred more frequently than others. 'Personalising their responses' was seen in 60% of the writing sampled, followed by 40% of 'speaking with the writer'. The other eight themes rated reasonably low with 'identifying with the theme' at 20%, and 'having

shared similar experiences' and 'identifying with the character' both 13%. 'Enjoying the content', 'having empathy with the writer' and 'anticipating a theme developing' all occurred in 7% of the responsive writing sampled, with the theme 'supporting the writer's efforts' rating 0%.

Table 4.2 provides a list of examples of each of the nine themes occurring from within both the responders' and students' responsive writing samples. Again, the names of the students and responders have been changed to protect their confidentiality.

Table 4.2

Examples of responsive writing themes

| Themes | Responder examples | Student examples |
|-----------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Speaking with the writer | <i>Hello Marama, what a nice name. Do you know when I was your age I always wanted black hair. You are very lucky.</i> | <i>How come you didn't went to the movies on the holiday Annie? You have been away for one week. I was thinking that you have gone.</i> |
| Personalising their responses | <i>Talofa James, My name is Annie and I am Samoan.</i> | <i>Hi Rebecca, I like your name. Namaste I am Polly. My age is seven. I am a girl. My culture is Indian.</i> |
| Having shared similar experiences | <i>I'm pleased that you are learning to swim. I learnt to swim when I left school so I know how tricky it can be sometimes.</i> | <i>I love spider man too.</i> |
| Identifying with the theme | <i>Yes, my puppy loves swimming. She chases the tennis ball into the waves.</i> | <i>When did the power man come? Was it fun when your power was off?</i> |
| Enjoying the content | <i>Remember, I really love reading your stories. They make me smile all day long. Reading your stories is my favourite part of the school week!</i> | <i>Can't wait to hear from you!</i> |
| Identifying with the characters | <i>I remember when my Mum would say no to me, and just like you I would go to my room. Some 'time out' always makes me feel better as well.</i> | <i>I heard that your family likes going swimming, is that right?</i> |
| Supporting the writer's efforts | <i>I really look forward to reading your writing. Thank you for writing again. I hope you will write to me again soon.</i> | |
| Having empathy with the writer | <i>Oh no, that is a very sad weekend. I am really sorry to hear about your Uncle. You must have been very upset.</i> | <i>Is your teaching going well?</i> |
| Anticipating a theme developing | <i>I went to the beach that weekend too. Do you often go fishing when you go to the beach? I think I'll try fishing when I go next time too.</i> | <i>Did your puppy like his swim? Because my puppy went for a swim with me and my sister.</i> |

In the examples presented in Table 4.2 you can see how the responders and students have utilised each of the responsive writing themes within their writing. In the first row, a responder attempts to *speak with the writer* about physical qualities that her writer has mentioned in a previous piece of writing. Likewise, the student talks

directly to their responder by using both the responder's proper name and the word 'you' in their writing. In the second row, a responder *personalises her response* by writing personally about herself, as do the students; one in particular giving several detailed statements about herself and her personal identity. In the third row, a responder shares her *similar experience* of learning to swim, whilst a student shares a similar interest to that of his responder. In row four, the responder *identifies with the theme* by responding to her student's questions, and the students also respond to parts of the text that they feel are worthy of further interest. In row five, we see evidence of *enjoying the content*; the responders really express their love of reading their students' writing, using powerful words such as 'love', 'favourite' and 'smile'. Likewise, in the student column, a student expresses her joy also. Row six provides an example each of where both a responder and a student have *identified with the characters* within the previous response, while row seven provides an example of how the responders *showed their support for the writers' efforts*, although no examples of this theme were found in any of the students' writing. In row eight, a responder expresses *empathy for their writer* and her cousins, after she has been told by her writer of her Uncle's passing. A student also empathises by asking a question of how her responder's teaching is going. Finally, in line nine, both the responder and the student *anticipate themes developing* by elaborating on the previous text as well as posing a question for their partner.

Data from both Table 4.1 and Table 4.2 indicate that the responders had carried out the responsive written feedback strategy reasonably successfully and that students were receiving feedback responsive to the content of their writing, rather than feedback on errors. No instances of corrective feedback were noted in any of the writing samples. The data also indicate instances where the students were using, without any instruction, eight out of the nine themes being modelled by their responder. The percentage occurrence of seven out of the nine themes was recognisably lower than that in the first study (speaking with the writer and personalising their experiences in both studies occurred 100% of the time). This could be because there were five responders who provided the 30% of the writing that was sampled, in contrast with only one responder in Study one. The one responder in the first study understandably was more consistent across all students in each of her responses in terms of each of these nine themes.

Again, figure 4.1 and 4.2 provide examples of two responses between two different responders and their students. This provides a clearer picture of what the responsive written feedback programme looked like in Study two. As with Study one, students' samples have been copied exactly and show their editing attempts in blue. Again, students' names have been changed to protect confidentiality.

Figure 4.1

Writing Sample 10 (out of 13) between Annie and James

Hi James!

I love Mr Bean and all his funny movies. He makes the funniest faces, especially with his big googly eyes and pointy ears. Unfortunately, I did not get a chance to go to the movies or to eat popcorn and drink coke, but I did get to go up to Auckland and spend some time with my nephew.

Our class will be coming up to Auckland soon to see your class. I can't wait to meet you! Well James, till next week, be safe and be happy. And remember, I really love reading your stories. They make me smile all day long.

Annie.

Hi Annie hau come you ~~did~~ didt went to the movies on the holiday Annie. But ~~th~~ I had fun on the holiday and you miss the Bean's Holiday was fun to. Annie when I went k home my icoil give...

Figure 4.2

Writing Sample 5 (out of 11) between a responder and Mary

Ni hao Mary,

Wow! A black leaf that looks like a cup! I don't think I've ever seen one like that before. But you are right, it is Autumn and it's getting cold. It also means rain! I like rain though, but if it starts to be lightening and thunder my dogs get scared and start scratching at the door.

I've never read Flat Stanley before, I will have to read it one day. Sounds like you have lots of fun at school, must be a lot of work to build an animal enclosure! Kia Kaha!

It is so cool that you can do a dolphin now. It is extra special if it is a secret, because it means that only very few people can know. Good idea-I should take swimming lessons, maybe they will teach me how to do a dolphin too. That would be cool to learn.

From Cia.

Ni hoa Cia,

When it's the end of May you might be able to see my animal enclosure. Imagein if I was flat Mary. Now guess what my friend Mary M is star of the week. It will be a big holloboleoo if you'r dogs start scarathing the door. One of the kids in my class has a hair cut and I'm getteng longer hair now. In the weekends I went to Rainbow Zend and the people in my family all got balls in the clown faces exceat my little brothers and sister. I chose a rabbit for my teddy.

It is interesting to see that in both cases the responders have responded to the content of a previous piece of writing and that the student responds in turn. Thus the themes continue from one sample to another. This helps trust in the responder-student relationship to build between the pair. The examples also show how the students have the confidence to write words as they hear them, not letting incorrect spelling or other conventions get in the way of the message. For example, the first student writes *icoil* (uncle); the second student writes *scarathing* (scratching); and *Rainbow Zend* (Rainbow's end). The first student has English as their second language; the second student has English as their first language.

Outcome Measures

In this study, a pre writing assessment sample was taken from all students using their first entry in their responsive written feedback books. This sample was responded to and analysed following the procedure outlined for writing assessment in the methods chapter. The post writing assessment sample was similarly the last entry in their responsive written feedback books. Data from all students who participated in the programme are presented. Again, the same measures as were used in Study one were taken and effect sizes calculated on the differences between the mean pre and post scores on each measure.

Table 4.3 presents the writing analysis for students' pre and post writing samples. The five quantitative writing measures were: the total number of words attempted in the ten minutes of writing (*Total words attempted*); the total number of challenging words (words in level 4 and above on the Arvidson's Levels list) attempted that were correct (*Correct challenging words*); and the percentage of writing accuracy (*Accuracy*). The two qualitative measures were independent reader ratings of interest to the reader (*Interest*) and level of language fluency (*Fluency*). Both measures were rated on a seven point scale, where seven is the highest score.

Each data column in Table 4.3 represents the measure taken ten weeks apart. The pre writing sample was taken on commencement of the programme. Ten weeks following that, the post writing sample was taken. In the first row of each unshaded section is an analysis of data from all 16 students who participated in the responsive writing programme in Study two. In order to identify the effect of the ten weeks of responsive writing on students whose second language was English a further analysis was undertaken with the writing samples provided by these 16 students. In the second row is the progress of the eight students from this group who had English as their second language (L2), and in the third row is the progress of the remaining eight students from this group whose first language was English (L1).

Table 4.3 Qualitative and Quantitative Writing Measures for Study Two

| QUANTITATIVE WRITING MEASURES: STUDY TWO 2007 | | | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------|
| MEASURE: TOTAL WORDS | PRE | POST | P value | d (effect size) |
| All Students (n=16) | 36.69 | 75 | <0.01 | 1.24 |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 29.5 | 70.75 | 0.01 | 1.52 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 43.88 | 79.25 | 0.06 | 1.01 |
| MEASURE: (L4-7) CHALLENGING WORDS | PRE | POST | P value | d (effect size) |
| All Students (n=16) | 14.81 | 24 | 0.09 | 0.62 |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 11.63 | 20 | 0.23 | 0.62 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 18 | 28 | 0.24 | 0.62 |
| MEASURE: ACCURACY | PRE | POST | P value | d (effect size) |
| All Students (n=16) | 92.4% | 85.1% | 0.05 | -0.71 |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 90.6% | 83% | 0.21 | -0.65 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 94.25% | 87.25% | 0.14 | -0.78 |
| QUALITATIVE WRITING MEASURES: STUDY TWO 2007 | | | | |
| MEASURE: INTEREST | PRE | POST | P value | d (effect size) |
| All Students (n=16) | 4.63 | 4.81 | 0.66 | 0.16 |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 4.25 | 4.5 | 0.62 | 0.25 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 5 | 5.13 | 0.83 | 0.11 |
| MEASURE: FLUENCY | PRE | POST | P value | d (effect size) |
| All Students (n=16) | 4.25 | 4.5 | 0.58 | 0.20 |
| Second Language English (n=8) | 3.88 | 4.13 | 0.68 | 0.21 |
| First Language English (n=8) | 4.63 | 4.88 | 0.70 | 0.20 |

The writing measures for the sixteen students in Study two appear in column one of Table 4.3. In column two are the pre-programme assessment scores and in column three are the post-programme assessment scores. In column four is the probability of the difference between pre and post means shown as P values from analyses carried out using these data. In line with Study one, although P values were calculated for every pre and post difference, because of the very small samples and variability within the groups of students, the effect size measure, in the fifth column, provides a more useful indication of the strength of the pre-post changes.

Again, it is important to note Hattie's (in press) recent meta-analysis on achievement, drawn from a synthesis of more than 800 studies, that estimated the strength of the yearly effect of maturation and class programme in English medium, in reading, mathematics and writing from Years 4 to 13, would be represented by an effect size of 0.35. The effect sizes for total words and challenging words shown in Table 4.3 far exceed this criterion of 0.35. Again it is important to note that these strong effect sizes have appeared after only ten weeks of the responsive writing strategy being implemented (combined with the existing class writing programme) rather than the full school year.

Quantitative Measures

A very impressive increase in total words written was shown between these different groups of students (all students from 36.69 to 75; L2 students from 29.5 to 70.75; and L1 students from 43.88 to 79.25). The effect sizes on this measure were stronger in this study than those in Study one. In terms of the measure of challenging words correct, all groups made similar improvements. All students increased their total words written by an average 9.19 (14.81 to 24); L2 students increased this by an average of 8.37, (11.63 to 20), whilst L1 showed an increase of 10, (18 to 28). The moderate to strong effect sizes across each of these groups for challenging words correct, were identical, at 0.62. All students were attempting to write many more challenging words and writing them correctly at the post-programme assessment. Hence, students were writing many more words in the ten minutes provided for the writing samples to be gathered and using more challenging words correctly at the post-programme measure that they used at the pre-programme measure. In study two,

measures of accuracy between all groups of students dropped slightly, between pre and post samples (all from 92.4% to 85.1%; L2 from 90.6% to 83%; and L1 from 94.25% to 87.25%). The resulting effect sizes from these data are -0.71; -0.65; and -0.78. It is important to note here that the responsive written feedback process does not provide students with feedback on accuracy. While accuracy is of value, if the feedback to students had insisted on accuracy above all else, it is most likely that they would have written much less. Their efforts may have gone into getting their spelling and grammar absolutely correct, rather than into ensuring their message was communicated clearly.

Qualitative Measures

As in Study one, the qualitative shifts of audience interest and language fluency (as rated by the independent scorer) were assessed on a scale of one to seven, with seven being the highest. For measures of audience interest each group of students improved slightly between pre and post assessment samples (all students from 4.63 to 4.81; L2 students from 4.25 to 4.5; and L1 students from 5 to 5.13). The effect sizes were 0.16; 0.25; and 0.11 respectively. Although students' gains in audience interest show a smaller effect size, it is important to remember that these gains were made over a relatively short period of time (between 11 and 13 writing exchanges).

Similarly, measures of language fluency show that all students increased slightly between pre and post assessments (all students from 4.25 to 4.5; L2 students from 3.88 to 4.13; and L1 students from 4.63 to 4.88). The effect sizes were 0.20; 0.21; and 0.20 respectively. As was the case for the measures of audience interest, students' gains in fluency yielded only small effect sizes. However, it is important to note that these occurred over a relatively short period of time.

The difference in qualitative outcome measures between Study one and Study two do not suggest differences in rating criteria between different scorers, because the same scorer was used for both studies.

Overall Effect Size

For L2 students, the average effect size for the quantitative measures was 0.33 and the average effect size for gains on the qualitative measures was 0.98. For L1 students,

the average effect size for the quantitative measures was 0.52 and the average effect size for the qualitative measures was 1.59. All averages exceed 0.35 (except for L2 students' quantitative average just below this at 0.33). A picture of what these changes look like within the writing of a student who is a second language learner, over pre, mid and post measures, can be seen by looking at appendices four to six.

Narratives of Experience

In the next section, the experiences of the three key participants who took part in the study are presented. These participants were the students, one of the 14 responders, and me the teacher who oversaw the running of this study within my own classroom programme. This section is organised around a series of themes, again which arose by talking with the participants themselves within the 'interviews as chat' process. Interestingly, these four themes are the same themes raised by the participants in Study one: writing the stories; receiving and reading/sharing the writing; benefits of the responsive writing; and meeting together at the conclusion of the programme.

Theme 1: Writing the stories

Theme one explores both a responder's and the students' thoughts on their experiences of writing their stories to each other. As the teacher I also share my thoughts around this aspect of the programme. Annie, the responder, has asked that her real name be used in this thesis. Annie first talks about how, for her, the process of responsive writing can be related to the concept of personalised learning.

***Annie:** I liked it. We all enjoyed it in our class. I don't think anybody did not like anything about it. I think I liked it because it was one on one, you had one student each. It's like personalised learning, yeah we enjoyed that.*

Okay you do writing but it's like yeah it's more like a conversation. I don't know if it has actually sunk in to him, that conversational writing can be, you know, can go into everything within the classroom. Maybe he just thought it was for that particular moment, that ten minute moment.

Annie talked about the importance of being responsive to what her student had written in order to make connections. She also spoke of the need to let the student 'drive the conversation':

Um we were told at the start of it to match their ideas. So whatever they had written about, if they had written, like James had written about going to the zoo and his favourite animal was the giraffe. So you always had to match what they wrote like I would say I went to the Hamilton Zoo over the holidays but it's not as big as the Auckland Zoo. Like try and connect with them. In your own writing you were told to model the correct spelling. So like I put down my favourite was the giraffe and the snake. So use the same words as he has used, to use them back as well. Yeah not so much, to let them drive the conversation but asking questions about it but to let them drive the conversation. Eventually went from liking the zoo to liking the beach to liking the movies and then that's when I said to him in one of my letters that over the holidays I didn't get to go to the movies. He told me I missed out on Mr. Bean's Holiday and it was really, really funny. In other words you need to go and see it.

The students talked about their enjoyment of writing their stories for an audience:

Um, [I enjoyed] getting to talk to a person that I didn't know but was really friendly...that I wanted to talk to.

[I enjoyed] like, writing back to them, like how I went to the beach.

[I enjoyed] sending them our writing.

I enjoyed writing to my buddy. I had fun like when I write to my buddy, my buddy writes back to me. I like her pictures. I just had fun.

This student emphasised the responsive writing being purposeful for others to understand it:

I enjoyed sending them our writing. Because we got to do some writing and they could understand it. When we go and write to them, when they go to it they can understand what we are writing to them.

One student recalled a specific part that entertained him as he read his responder's writing:

It was cool and um... I like the part when um, she wrote that um, when she took her cake out of the fridge and um, it was gone, when she look back it was gone. She was um, she was hungry and when she took out of the fridge and when she looked back it was gone.

As the teacher I think the students loved writing to their partners. It was purposeful for them and every Monday morning they had someone else to share their weekend experiences with. It was good for the less-skilled students too, who could also participate and knew that what they wrote would be understood and accepted. No one worried about spelling, I guess because they knew it wasn't an issue, it wasn't what was important. The message and getting that across was more important.

Theme two: Receiving and reading/sharing the writing

Theme two reveals what the responder thought of her experiences with reading her partner's writing each week. As the teacher, I talk of my experiences around this in terms of how I perceived it and also from being able to read what both the responder and students had written to one another.

Annie talked about the excitement of decoding what their students had written:

We enjoyed when we got the responses back. Then our group would try to work out what the children had written. That was fun. And then the spelling, the children's own inventive spelling.

From my perspective as the teacher I think the students looked forward to Mondays and reading what their partner had written back to them. Some had even drawn little pictures to go with their writing. I could hear the excitement in the students' voices as they raced to share with each other what their partner had written. If they needed help with reading I was available or they knew who else they could ask to help them. Their smiles told me how much they loved doing this whole programme, especially when they read something about their partner that they could relate to.

Theme three: Benefits of the responsive writing

Theme three outlines the benefits of the responsive written feedback programme the way that the students, the responder and me as the teacher had perceived them.

Again, Annie talks about the responsive writing being meaningful for her student:

I think he [the student who she wrote to] actually enjoyed it. Yeah he actually enjoyed that, writing was not just filling up the page. Yeah it was meaningful, yeah. Yeah although the passages weren't that much longer but they were in more depth.

Annie is clearly picking up on the issue that for her, quantity was not as important as quality. She then mentions her desire to utilise this concept of responsive writing in the future with her own classes and using the strategy to also reach out into the community:

Also as a teacher I found that, a beginning teacher I haven't been out in the classroom yet, I was thinking it definitely works. Yeah, yeah and I was thinking surely I may not have a classroom of postgraduates to help me but parents or caregivers or grandparents.

Several of the students talked about how they noticed when their responders had corrected their spelling. Not by changing the student's writing, but by modelling the correct spelling of the word for them in their responses. They also talked about how responsive writing had helped with their writing, that by writing in this authentic context they were learning about writing through the writing task itself.

It sort of helped me, because they were teaching me how to spell right...like words and I just wanted to learn more about them.

[It helped me when] *we got to do some writing and they could understand it.*

Um...that when we go and write to them they...when they go to it they can understand what we are writing to them. My partner correcting my spelling [when they wrote back to her].

My partner corrected my spelling.

When you write in the book and it helps us to learn to write faster.

As in Study one, I think as the teacher that the benefits were extensive. The students received quality modelling of spelling and sentence structure; a few students even commented to me on how they noticed the correct nature of their buddy's spelling words. I also think it did so much for my students' self esteem and confidence, having this extra person caring for just them, and most of the time, showing an interest in only them. Study two differed in this respect from Study one, where all the students shared the same responder. This time the students had their own 'personal' buddy/responder (a few responders had two students as there were slightly fewer students than responders). As mentioned above, responsive written feedback benefited me as I developed a greater insight into my students' lives, therefore adding strength to my relationship with each of them. It also helped me in understanding how my students' learning was going, in terms of comprehending a text and responding (or not) to the given information. Responsive written feedback added another authentic dimension to my existing classroom writing programme.

Theme four: Meeting together at the end

Theme four, meeting together at the end, tells the experiences of the students, the responders and me as the teacher in terms of the day that the responders came to the classroom to meet all of their students. The meeting at the end was beneficial for us all, I think for a lot of my students that will be a day in their lives that they will never forget, and hopefully a reminder of how special and important they are. It also taught us all about the power of writing in forming relationships with others.

Annie spoke open-heartedly about her memories of this day and the special place that her student holds in her heart. The student's name has been changed to protect his confidentiality:

It sounds cliché but I knew him instantly. It wasn't because he was the boy with bright new sneakers on as he promised in his last entry that he'd be wearing, but because of his cheeky shinning grin that said, "Hey I'm here, I am James!"

I could tell it was the same for him too for he spoke first asking, “Are you my teacher?” To which I replied, “Yes I am James and I do love your new shoes”. More smiles.

We exchanged gifts and then it was introductions as he raced me around the classroom introducing me to his classmates, “this is my teacher”. He then showed me once again his new shoes saying that the children weren’t really allowed to wear their shoes inside but his teacher let him just for this day. I was then shown the cloak bay where the shoes came off and shoved into his bag (another talking spot as it was the bag he had bought at the warehouse in one of his stories). Next, it was back inside to see his books where he read to me his letters. He was particularly happy about the ‘smiley’ faces I had put in my entries to him. We then reread the whole correspondence with him reading his entries and me mine, often stopping to laugh and ask questions at various points that triggered our memories.

I then asked him to explain his gift to me, a coloured star with five pieces of advice written in his best handwriting on each star pinnacle: “Be good”, “Be happy”, “Have fun”, “Take care” and “Another take care”. I was curious as to why it had two ‘take cares’ to which he replied, “one take care is for you and the other take care is for me.”

Annie spoke about this special gift that her student had given her and his words of advice upon the star that he had made for her. She related it to all aspects of her life and still makes use of it to this day.

I love his star advice for me to be good and happy by remembering to have fun and ensuring to take care of my needs so that I can be in a position to take care of the needs of others. There is great wisdom in his words for it reminds me that I can only be in a position to help and lift another when I am standing on higher ground myself. Too often I get bogged under with taking care of everyone else’s needs before my own and consequently, I get overwhelmed at the enormity of it all. However, James’ star (which incidentally takes pride of place on my office wall) is my constant reminder of what’s important and gives me perspective. To this gem of knowledge, I am forever grateful.

One of the students spoke about solving the ‘mystery’ of what his responder looked like the day they met, and his disappointment when the responders had to leave:

[I liked] when they came. How I got to see how she looked like. It was surprising, because she looked nice, like, the hair. I liked playing games [with her]. [I didn't like it] when they left.

As the teacher, I felt the day was magical. This will be a day that not only my students are sure to remember, but a highlighting day in my career as a teacher as well. The responders wanted to talk about their writing with their student, to clarify parts they had written and add responses to them. The students showed them other work they had done in the classroom, and what surprised me the most was their ability to communicate with these adults; the initial shyness that I somewhat anticipated was virtually non-existent, right from the start. The students performed some Māori and Samoan songs and then a shared lunch was enjoyed at the end. The atmosphere was unbelievable; the relationships that had developed over the past ten weeks through the writing exchanges were evident. I almost felt as though I didn't even need to be there, the students just took control of them selves and were absolutely engaged with their buddies. It really was a positive experience for both the students and the responders in which all participants benefited.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Introduction

This thesis has attempted to explore retrospectively, responsive written feedback as a means to support written language of six to eight year olds, including students traditionally minoritised within mainstream New Zealand classrooms because of cultural and/or language differences.

This research proposed to develop understandings around the following four research questions:

1. What does the literature tell us about effective responses for students within mainstream New Zealand classrooms who face literacy learning challenges because of cultural or language differences?
2. How effectively did the responders in the two studies undertaken within my own classroom, implement the responsive writing strategies?
3. What effect did the responsive writing have on all participating students?
4. What effect did the responsive writing have on participating students whose second language was English?

This chapter discusses the implications of the findings to these questions.

Learning from the Literature: Students challenged by cultural or language differences

The literature reviewed suggested that there are students in mainstream New Zealand classrooms who face literacy learning challenges because of cultural and/or language differences. One group where this has been particularly evident is with Māori students. Bishop and Berryman's (2006) research clearly showed that deficit thinking by teachers continues to emphasise the negative features of being Māori, with Māori students continually being blamed for their own learning failure. Far less attention was paid to what teachers themselves, can do to improve this situation. Assimilation into the dominant culture, with its cultural knowledge, language and beliefs continues to be maintained as the superior means of communication, retention and transference of knowledge (Bishop, & Glynn, 1999). The implications of this continue to impact on many students from minority cultures, who participate in our mainstream education system today. Here, the colonial mainstream culture, language and

discourses continue to dominate, and other minority cultures are often marginalised or silenced (Berryman, 2008). The New Zealand situation of many Māori students is not unlike the pathologising of indigenous students in other colonised countries (Shields, Bishop, & Mazawi, 2005). According to our educational statistics, amongst the students in New Zealand classrooms who are marginalised and inequitably serviced by New Zealand's education system are Māori and Pasifika (Bishop, et al., 2007). These students, by percentage of the population, are the highest group for stand-downs, suspensions, early leaving exemptions and they leave school with far fewer qualifications (Ministry of Education, 2005).

Effective Responses

More effective responses for students within mainstream New Zealand classrooms include the importance of teachers listening to students and being culturally responsive to them, thus allowing students to use their own cultural experiences as the basis for learning (Bishop, & Berryman, 2006). More effective responses also include attempting to engage with and collaborate with the communities of these students, but on the communities' own terms (Berryman, 2008). The literature (Bishop, et al., 2003; Bishop, & Glynn, 1999; Corson, 1998) states how schools should attempt to engage respectfully with the expertise and knowledge of these communities in order to establish and make connections with these students. However, students need to be able to bring their own cultural experiences into the classroom and have them supported and to feel that their own culture and language is valued as normal and legitimate within the classroom. This has the potential to create contexts in which these students find that the experiences of their homes are more aligned with those of the school. The literature (Berryman, & Wearmouth, 2008; Bishop, & Glynn, 1999; Ministry of Education, 2003) suggests how these two factors alone can increase the levels of achievement for such students.

Glynn, Wearmouth and Berryman (2006) also suggest the need for schools to utilise important socio-cultural contexts for mediating students' learning. Literature in this area tells how students who come from cultures other than that of the majority cultural group, which the mainstream education system undoubtedly is aligned, can often experience a miss-match between the culture of the home and school (Ballam, 2008; McNaughton, 2002). Too often, this miss-match ripples on into adulthood and thus

into wider society as well. Glynn, Wearmouth and Berryman, (2006) identify four important characteristics that make up these important socio-cultural contexts for learning. The first is the provision of opportunities for learners to initiate their own learning. In socio-cultural contexts, students must be given opportunities to initiate questions and conversations on their own terms, and not simply left to respond directly to adult or peer questions alone. Secondly, socio-cultural contexts for learning highlight the importance of providing shared activities between less-skilled and more-skilled participants, so that both benefit from it. A genuinely shared activity is one which involves enjoyment from both participants, where the control and direction of the activity is reasonably balanced between the two participants. The third characteristic involves a mutual reciprocal learning relationship, as in *ako* (Pere, 1982), so that when learners interact together they can have an impact on each other, and their learning and behaviour is enhanced as a result of these interactions. Lastly, the amount of quality feedback students receive for their learning is seen as important for mediating learning within socio-cultural contexts (Glynn, 1985; Hattie, 2003).

The use of responsive written feedback is suggested in the literature as a strategy that can specifically generate socio-cultural contexts for learning such as these. Responsive written feedback involves providing students with an adult or peer support person who has been instructed in their role as a writing responder. Students and responders write to each other regularly. Responders are trained to respond to the messages in the students' writing (Berryman, & Glynn, 2002). They do not attempt to correct any errors such as incorrect grammar, structure or spelling, nor do they make any evaluative comments. The literature and research outlines extensive benefits of responsive written feedback programmes, such as increases in student achievement in written language as well as greater levels of self-esteem (Berryman, et al., 2001). Benefits such as these, together with my desire to develop a more socio-culturally responsive writing and classroom learning programme led me to inquiring into the possibility of a responsive written feedback programme for my class. Prior to Study one, I could see that my classroom literacy programme alone was not meeting the needs of all my students. It was at this point, that I sought advice and discussed the possibility of a responsive written feedback programme with someone from outside of the local community who was of the same culture as many of my students and who I also shared a connection with. Importantly, she had also been involved in previous

research involving socio-cultural contexts for mediating literacy learning and indeed responsive written feedback itself.

Accordingly, this thesis examines two responsive writing studies that emerged as a result of these discussions and as a result of the learning that I took back into my own classroom. In each of these studies, I was seeking ways to respond more effectively for the students in my class who came with a range of different cultural experiences and/or languages. It was therefore important to understand how effectively, in accordance with the procedures outlined by Berryman, et al. (2001) the responders had implemented the responsive writing strategies, and what impact these strategies had on students' writing.

Effectiveness of the implementation of the Responsive Writing Strategies

Study one: 2005

Treatment Integrity

In Study one, the treatment integrity analysis was carried out in order to capture how effectively the responder had used the nine responsive written feedback themes (speaking with the writer; personalising their responses; having shared similar experiences; identifying with the theme; enjoying the content; identifying with the characters; supporting the writer's efforts; having empathy with the writer; and anticipating a theme developing) as identified in the literature (Glynn, Jerram, & Tuck, 1986). This was done by randomly selecting approximately 30% of the students' writing books and then analysing 30% of both the students' writing samples and the responder's written responses.

The results (in Table 3.1) showed that in Study one, the frequency with which the responder had carried out all nine themes was high; five of the nine themes were found in 100% of the writing samples (speaking with the writer; personalising the responses; enjoying the content; identifying with the characters; and supporting the writer's efforts). The themes with the lowest incidences (although still reasonably high at 61%), were: having shared similar experiences; and having empathy with the writer.

The responder, Silomiga, was experienced in the responsive written feedback strategy and had previously participated as a responder in at least two other responsive writing studies. She had also contributed to writing up these previous research studies. She is of both Māori and Samoan descent and therefore could connect culturally with many of the students in my class. As a non-indigenous teacher I was unable to make these same cultural connections. Because of the number of students in the class, it was necessary to split the students into two groups. This was to make the task of responding to each student on a weekly basis manageable for a single responder. Silomiga's writing samples demonstrated much consistency in terms of the themes and the structure of the responses that she provided. She also managed to write individual and meaningful responses that were particular to each of the students. Each week when students received their responses from Silomiga, they read with enthusiasm and then shared with one another what they saw as the highlights from the responses. Just as Silomiga had modelled for them, they made connections to experiences she had shared about herself and that they could relate to.

Out of interest, I also carried out the treatment integrity exercise on approximately 30% of the students' writing samples, to identify the extent to which the students had used each of these nine themes within their own writing samples. It was interesting to see that even though the students had received no specific instruction or training in responsive written feedback, they nevertheless used most of the themes in their writing. This could have been because the students became increasingly aware of the responder's modelling, though establishing a close writing relationship with her. Perhaps unknowingly, students became familiar with the content and structure of Silomiga's responses, enabling them to carry that through into their own writing. As the responses continued, both Silomiga and students shared new information about themselves and an increasing wider range of experiences. This enabled connections to be made between them and thus, deeper relationships to develop. The highest occurring theme shown by the students sampled was that of personalising their responses. This occurred in 94% of the writing, the lowest theme evident was enjoying the writing content, (11%). The other seven themes occurred to a varying extent within the range (11% to 94%).

From the analysis of the responder and student writing samples in Study one it was clear that the responsive writing was being undertaken with a high degree of integrity, and that students were enjoying the writing exchanges enormously.

Study two: 2007

Treatment Integrity

In Study two, responders were a class of post-graduate education students at a university, undertaking a research exercise that also involved being trained in responsive written feedback. The treatment integrity analysis showed instances of each of the themes generally occurring at a lower rate than occurred with the single responder in Study one. However, both speaking with the responder and personalising the responses occurred in 100% of the writing samples. The other seven themes varied between 87% and 27%. These noticeably lower results could have occurred because, for this group of responders, it was their first time participating in a responsive writing programme. It may also have been that they were being trained in responsive written feedback simultaneously with participating in a research and academic programme of study. Certainly, having one responder in the first study allowed for greater consistency in the written responses, as opposed to using three separate responder samples for treatment integrity in Study two.

Again, treatment integrity was carried out on students' writing samples to see the extent to which each of the nine responsive writing themes occurred. There was a mixed response. The theme of personalising their responses occurred in 60% of the samples. There were no examples of the theme supporting the writer's efforts. Perhaps these lower occurrences could have resulted because this group of students were younger than those in Study one. The first study was with students in Year three and four; most of the students being seven years old, with a small number being six or eight years old. The students in Study two were in Year three; most were six years old, with a few being seven. Given that responders' writing samples in Study two showed lower instances of seven out of the nine responsive written feedback themes than occurred with the responder in Study one, this could indicate that the quality of modelling of themes for the students was not as high and therefore this could have impacted negatively on the quality of the students' responses. None the less, each week when the students received their written responses, they were excited to read

what their responder had written and similarly to the response of students in Study one, they particularly made reference to parts that they could relate to and make connections to their own experiences. Reciprocally, responders also enjoyed reading their student's writing. This is perhaps best encapsulated by Annie when she spoke on behalf of her class, saying that there was nothing that they did not enjoy about the writing. The fact that most of the responders had one student each meant that they could develop a deeper relationship by sharing experiences and making connections with only each other. This is in comparison to Study one, where Silomiga was the sole responder for the whole class of students. However, Silomiga spoke of the importance in ensuring she had personalised each response by writing to each student as an individual.

Both responders also talked about the importance of matching the students' experiences with their own, in order to make a connection with them. They did this where ever possible, by talking of similar experiences to those of the students. This exercise enabled greater development of the relationship between each responder and student and importantly the confidence to write more and to learn about writing from the writing experience itself.

Responders in both studies described their duties as responders as being essentially to respond to the messages in the students' writing and to not use any form of corrective feedback such as spelling or grammar. Clearly, they understood their roles in this process. The responsive written feedback strategy was characterised by the correct spelling and sentence structures modelled for the students in the responders' responses. Students' self esteem and confidence grew as they realised the messages in their writing were more important than having correct spelling or sentence structure. Some of the students spoke about how they noticed when their partners modelled correct spelling words within their written responses, which they had attempted in the previous sample. This is remarkable given there was no explicit teaching of spelling, or any other concept of written language.

Writing Improvements for all Students

Before discussing the outcome measures, it is important to reiterate from the method chapter the amount of time that the responsive written feedback took to implement

over each of the writing studies. The students wrote on one day per week, for ten weeks. The responsive writing involved a period of less than half an hour per week all together. This time involved reading and sharing their responses from the previous week, followed by oral preparation and organisation for writing. Once the writing itself had begun, this was uninterrupted for ten minutes, followed by five minutes allowed for students to edit their writing. This is little time taken by the students and teacher when one considers the whole dynamics of an entire classroom writing programme. As mentioned in the results, in a recent meta-analysis on achievement, Hattie (in publication) has estimated the yearly effect of maturation and class programme, in reading, mathematics and writing from Years 4 to 13, would be represented by pre-post effect size of 0.35. Although these students were in Years 3 and 4 it is interesting to note the overall high number of effect sizes within the tables (Table 3.3; 3.4; and 4.3) that exceed 0.35. It is also important to note that these strong effect sizes have appeared after only ten weeks of the responsive writing strategy being implemented (combined with the existing class writing programme), rather than the full school year.

As a whole, students in both studies showed gains between pre and post-programme assessment data across both quantitative and qualitative writing measures (total words written; challenging words correct; accuracy; audience interest; and fluency). Some very high gains were made in the total number of words written from pre-programme to post-programme. For example in Study two, this went from an average of 36.69 words written by all students in the ten minutes of writing at pre-programme to 75 words written in the same time post-programme. Thus, students almost doubled the amount of words written within the ten minutes of allocated writing time. This had a very strong effect size of 1.24. In Study one, important gains were made in the number of challenging words correct, with group one improving from an average of 14 challenging words pre-programme to 25.67 post-programme. Group two made similar gains, with an average of 11.7 pre-programme to 19.8 challenging words attempted at post-programme. Both groups had high effect sizes of 0.75 and 0.61 respectively. In terms of the area of accuracy, this was the only measure that experienced a slight decrease between pre and post-programme assessment samples. In Study two, the levels of accuracy dropped from pre to post-programme from 92.4% to that of 85.1%, resulting in a slightly negative effect size. This is likely to be

because both the total number of words written and the number of challenging words correct increased impressively between the pre and post-programme assessment samples. Students' confidence and ability to write more words in the time provided increased significantly. As discussed in the results section, it is important to note also that although accuracy is of value, if the feedback to students had insisted on accuracy above all else, it is most likely that they would have written much less. Their efforts may have gone into getting their spelling and grammar absolutely correct, rather than into ensuring their message was communicated clearly. As clearly shown by the examples of students' writing responses in the results section (Figures 3.1; 3.2; 4.1; and 4.2), the students grew the confidence to attempt challenging words, and get them correct, as well as editing their writing in order to make the messages as clear as possible for the reader. The students really wanted to get their message across clearly. Their awareness of writing for an audience, as opposed to merely the teacher, increased as they had to arrange their writing in such a way that their message would be as clear as possible for the responder to read.

From the writing outcome data of all students it is clear that the responsive writing programme resulted in clear writing improvements for students in both studies. The high level of effect sizes after only ten weeks of intervention (together with the regular classroom writing programme) is impressive, as many exceed Hattie's (in publication) 0.35 effect size criterion.

Writing Improvements for students with English as a second Language

The analysis from pre and post-programme writing measures for students with English as a first language and students with English as a second language demonstrate how effective these two responsive writing programmes were, in supporting the learning of both these groups of students.

Outcome Measures

The data show that although second language (English) learners (L2) scored lower than that of their first language (English) speaking (L1) counterparts, they still managed to make consistent gains across almost all writing measures. All students were exposed to good quality models of English language features, structures and spelling. As shown by the writing gains (Table 3.4 and Table 4.3) in the results

chapters, both L2 students and L1 students felt comfortable enough to attempt unknown and often very challenging words in order to get their message across. One example shown in the writing sample in Figure 4.1, is the L2 student who appears to have attempted to spell the word *uncle*, his approximation being *icoil*, and *mister* being *miss the*. He brought his own knowledge of phonemes from his own language to the English writing context, confident that his message would be absolutely understood and accepted. The students did not show any sign of fear in not knowing, but were prepared to try even the most challenging words. This may have been because they understood that features such as correct spelling in this context were less important. In this responsive writing context what was important was getting their message across to their responder, a person who they had grown to trust. The responders in turn, were then able to model correct spelling and/or sentence structure when they responded back to the students. What is also of importance is the evidence of the students growing confidence to edit shown in figure 4.1. The editing in this example shows that while the message was important, accuracy was also being carefully considered. It appears as though he was trying really hard to make it as correct as he could for his responder. The student also used his responder's name (Annie) three separate times throughout a single response. This is remarkable and highlights the ownership of the relationship between him self and Annie. Here was a person who he was able to connect with at a cultural level and a person with whom he had increasingly felt culturally comfortable, even though at that time she was someone that he had never met in person. This aligns itself to findings from an ongoing study entitled *Te Kotahitanga* (Bishop, et al., 2007), which concluded that once the students' own culture was secure and their identities affirmed in the classroom learning context, as is what happened within these responsive writing studies, then students could get on with the business of learning.

The results from both the qualitative and quantitative writing data indicate that the one session per week over ten weeks, of ten minutes of writing followed by five minutes of editing, proved to be an extremely effective use of time for writing purposes. Teachers can achieve very effective results by using responsive written feedback strategies for improving their students' writing achievement.

Writers' Experiences

Speaking with both the students and the responders in each of the studies allowed me to obtain a better understanding of their combined experiences within each of these projects. The information gathered from the responder and student narratives indicated that the responsive written feedback programmes in both Study one and Study two were beneficial for all participants as well as enjoyed by all. Generally, the students believed and liked the fact that they were writing to someone who really wanted to read their writing and who was going to accept it as valid and being worthy of a response. Responsive writing was providing a genuine, authentic context for writing and an affirming process for them, in that they wrote about topics of their own choosing and experience and they wrote with a real 'writing' purpose; someone was going to read their writing and write back to them. The responders I spoke to from both studies also expressed their enjoyment and satisfaction in participating in the responsive written feedback. Silomiga, the responder in Study one, talked about being able to see the progress that the students had made in their writing samples as the programme developed. She also spoke about how she believed it helped to raise the students' levels of self esteem and gave them encouragement to persevere at things. In Study two, Annie, expressed her delight and spoke on behalf of her own postgraduate class in saying that she didn't think there was any aspect of it that anyone did not like. She also thought her responsive written feedback student enjoyed himself and learnt that writing could be purposeful, and was more meaningful than the regular classroom writing programme may have been. The students' identities were affirmed and their confidence grew. At the same time as their own cultural identity was being affirmed, they learned how to write through writing. Students were encouraged to bring their own cultural identities and experiences into the writing process, thus enabling them to learn to write with increasing purpose and confidence.

Overall Benefits of Responsive Written Feedback

Effective Writing Context

The analysis of the data resulting from these two responsive written feedback studies combined with the experiences of some of the students and a writing responder from each of the studies together with my own experiences as the classroom teacher, has

enabled me to develop a better understanding of some of the implications for applying responsive written feedback for and with others. These findings suggest that the responsive writing procedure was able to be used appropriately by both the students and responders in each of the two studies. This was demonstrated in both the students' and responders' writing through their use of the features of responsive writing. It was also demonstrated through both my own, as the teacher, and the responders' consistent efforts to refrain from using corrective feedback in any contexts related to responsive writing. Refraining from corrective feedback gave students the confidence to write more and to use increasingly challenging words. The responsive writing programme was successful for all students, no matter what their writing skills were and whether English was their first or second language. All students looked forward to the task; when the less-skilled writers had difficulty reading the responder's writing, they would willingly seek help from my self as their teacher, or more often a more-skilled peer. This was perhaps because the writing was authentic and purposeful, the students *wanted* to know what was in the writing; they were absolutely reading for meaning and with understanding. There was no shame in doing this, we had developed as a community of readers and writers, who clearly enjoyed the reading of their written responses as much as the writing. Importantly, from what the responders have said in the narratives, and from what Annie talked about on behalf of all the responders in Study two, they enjoyed the process as much as the students. The responsive written feedback provided an authentic context for writing. Although traditional corrective feedback was not used, the students' responses in the narratives indicate that they believed they had become more skilled writers and the writing data confirms this as so. Several students mentioned the purposefulness of responsive writing, while other students commented on how they had become aware of their partner's modelling of correct spelling when they wrote their responses. The students were unconsciously exposed to a wider range of English language models and features they otherwise may not have been exposed to. As the programme progressed, several students became more sophisticated in their responses, which indicate an increase in language skills and their knowledge of the English language.

The success of a responsive written feedback programme is further substantiated by the data from the outcome measures in the results chapters, which show clear indications of improvements of the students, in terms of the writing measures used

(total words written; challenging words correct; accuracy; audience interest and fluency). In the responsive writing samples, most students greeted their partners in their home languages, or a language other than English. This may have been seen by the students as a safe practice, in a context where the use of other languages was normalised for them. There was evidence of important cultural learning taking place. One example is the tuakana-teina relationship between the responders and the students. It was also demonstrated in the fact that students felt comfortable to be themselves, as they chose to share information about who they are and experiences personal and important to them. The responsive writing programme allowed them to affirm their own identities, through the process of learning to write. For me as the teacher, I found the responsive written feedback to be a purposeful and effective intervention to enhance my existing written language programme. It was practical to implement and added strength to what was already being taught.

Relationships with Students

Responsive writing helped the students and their responders to build a relationship with each other. On this basis they were able to make connections and develop a deeper respect and understanding for each other. It was intended that a genuine relationship would develop with mutual agendas and interests within the responsive writing context. The power-sharing that took place between the students and the responders as they exchanged writing enabled an equitable partnership to develop, where control was shared between all participants, and where all, including those whose second language was English and who may formerly have been challenged by the culture of mainstream education could benefit. In this context there were no power struggles; simply everyone sought to collaborate on a common agenda that is, raising student achievement. The partnerships were equitable, students and responders learned from and taught each other in an authentic writing context which allowed for this to happen. This meant that the students felt safe enough and secure within themselves to bring their own experiences to the learning process. And thus, with their cultural identities affirmed, they were able to get on with the business of learning. In the words of these students:

“It was like, the most interesting thing in that year.”

“It’s like I just had a new friend. I loved every bit.”

“It told me to like, keep on going and never give up.”

“I enjoyed sending them our writing. Because we got to do some writing and they could understand it. When we go and write to them, when they go to it they can understand what we are writing to them”.

As the students’ teacher, my relationship with each of them also deepened, as I read their written responses and developed further insight into the lives of each of them.

Home-school Partnerships

Just like the cultural festival discussed in the literature review, what made the responsive writing successful and sustained it in this school was that the parents and community members (including responders) chose to participate because the task was not imposed; rather they wanted to do it. This allowed parents to participate in the event and to contribute to it on their own terms, in consultation with the school, rather than vice versa (on the school’s terms, in consultation with parents) as is the more ‘normally’ accepted current practice in schools. The ownership and legitimacy of the programme belonged more with the parents and community members, and thus they were more likely to benefit. As Annie pointed out in the narratives, as a teacher she intends to use the strategy of responsive written feedback as a means of reaching out into her school community, working with the community for the benefit of the students.

Ko nga rangatahi inaianei, a, ko nga rangatira apōpō

The youth of today will be the leaders of tomorrow

Chapter six: Conclusion

Quantitative results from these two responsive written feedback studies, combined with qualitative evidence from speaking with both the students and one responder from each study, have allowed me to develop a better understanding of the implications and applications of responsive written feedback for others.

The results from this thesis show that the responsive writing programme was accessible for all of the students in both of the studies. Whether students were in years three or four, had English as their first or second language; or were more-skilled or less-skilled writers, they were all able to participate, and did so with success. When writing was meaningful to students and purposeful for them, as it was in this authentic context for writing, it became a highly positive experience for them. Responsive writing provided a genuine socio-cultural context for learning, where students were able to bring their own culture and first language with them in order to participate, and take control over the writing ‘conversation’. Many of the students greeted their responders in their first languages, and definitely shared regularly their cultural experiences with their responders. These experiences were important and personal to them. They felt comfortable enough to be themselves and to share those experiences that made up who they were as culturally located individuals. This tuakana-teina style relationship between the student and their responder meant that there was important cultural learning taking place and that the learning was appropriately scaffolded and being mediated by a more-skilled other. This process allowed the students to affirm their own cultural identities, within the context of learning to write. The students were allowed to share their writing responses with each other, doing so for clarity, assistance with difficult text, as well as for the sheer joy and excitement of sharing their writing with others. This context provided them with the desire to read for meaning and understanding, as well as excitement for the learning process. Both classes developed into a real community of readers and writers, forming writing relationships with the responders as the programme progressed. As is clear in the samples of writing within the results chapters, writing relationships between the students and their responders had developed into an element of trust between both people. As the students and responders continued to exchange

writing, mutual agendas and interests developed, thus developing a deeper understanding and respect for each other. There was a real sense of power-sharing, where an equitable partnership developed and the locus of control was shared between both participants; writers and responders. This, together with the socio-cultural context that contextualised the learning, meant that students felt safe to bring their own experiences to the learning context and in turn this allowed them to learn more successfully. This may also have been because, throughout Study one and Study two, Bishop's (1996) five elements of initiation; benefits; representation; legitimation; and accountability from his model for evaluating power-sharing relationships with Māori in research, has guided me in my work as I have endeavoured to implement these elements across all aspects of these studies, the writing exchanges, and the writing of this thesis.

The students' responses in the narratives indicate that they believed that they had developed more skills and expertise as writers even though traditional corrective feedback was never used. Several students talked about how they had become aware of their partner's modelling of correct spelling in their responses as well as the fact that this writing was for a real purpose. They were unconsciously being exposed to a wider range of English language models and features that one teacher alone may not have been able to provide. The effects of this were evident in the increasing level of sophistication that many of the students' writings displayed. The success of these two responsive written feedback studies is indeed evident in the results chapters, from both the qualitative and quantitative data, which show clear evidence of improvements, in terms of the range of writing measures used by these students across both measures of writing accuracy and writing fluency.

From a teacher's perspective, the responsive written feedback programme resulted in a wide range of success with highly impressive outcomes, many of which showed a very strong effect. This was impressive when considering the small amount of time required in the implementation of the responsive writing exchanges within my existing written language programme. Students wrote for only ten minutes, followed by five minutes editing time, on a weekly basis, for ten weeks. This, combined with the time taken to read and share the responses as well as organisation to write meant that the entire task took less than half an hour per week of class writing time. The

responsive writing complemented and added strength to the level and quality of teaching that the students were receiving, with very little additional time or effort involved on my part. This was an extremely effective use of time management in terms of the students' achievement outcomes that were produced.

What is of great importance is the strength of the effect sizes that the responsive writing programme resulted in for students in both studies in terms of quantitative and qualitative measures.

Only fifteen minutes of writing time per week for ten weeks was needed to accelerate students' learning and thus raise achievement levels in writing. This formed the basis of further learning for the students involved, providing them with the opportunity to take what they had learned from the responsive writing context into other areas of the curriculum. This intervention proved not only extremely effective, but also practical for me as the teacher to implement into my existing written language programme. Such a small amount of time to achieve the successful results from these two studies seems a small cost for the outcomes that were evident in the two responsive writing studies in this thesis, especially given that the students also spoke of enjoying their learning so much.

Ka whangaia, ka tupu, ka puawai.

That which is nurtured, blossoms and grows.

Appendices

Appendix One: Study One: Student 1, (Second Language English),
Writing Sample 1.

my Name is Chegowara my
From gnt I have a dog
and I have a alpeel tree I ^a have
and a Present.

Appendix Two: Study One: Student 1, (Second Language English),
Writing Sample 5

In the Heekows I
went to obat and my
Dad and I got some
fish and my Dad got some
shut and me I got some
10 shut and my Dad got
11 shut and we tea
it was good and my
Dad like to and my
Mum tea and my Brother
like to and my sister
W

Appendix Three: Study One: Student 1, (Second Language English), Writing Sample 10

In The Weekend I went to
go to the zoo I saw
a dog was play on
the swing I play in the
swing The dog run away.
and We play soccer with
my Bother and my sistre
~~in~~ in the park. my
sistre got was flower
for me beartdec
I play scr.

Appendix Four: Study Two: Student 1, (Second Language English),
Writing Sample 1

Monday 12 February
~~With~~ When you got are
father ask your

Appendix Five: Study Two: Student 1, (Second Language English),
Writing Sample 6

Tuesday 20 March 2007
I ~~to~~ like When I sho
my beshan and I sho
the 3 mountai and
tree and some casmestree
and * sho abeat When I
sho anacs to the
door and at ^{got} the
lata saca Zoo and.
I Sho are shacac door
and I Sho abuo

Appendix Six: Study Two: Student 1, (Second Language English),
Writing Sample 14

Wednesday 30 May
Hi Annie my Teacher was
away for weeks and Ther
was a nother Teacher and
at was a endycan and
she was a little pit shooting
shooting and my Teacher
was away for to weeks
and then the School and
we went to the shopping
and got me a drik

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