

## **“Addressing Obstacles to Success” - What science do midwives *really* need in practice?**

**Background:** This is a two year project comprising: Phase One dealing with the question: What aspects of science do newly graduated midwives really need to know in order to practise competently? Phase Two: How can science be taught more effectively to help students make meaningful theory/practice links?

**Literature:** Research from science and midwifery education, exploring perspectives of science education in midwifery programmes was reviewed. Insights emerged, demonstrating links between science teaching and workplace practice. These included themes around contrasting classroom and workplace learning; building science from practical knowledge; and rethinking curriculum-practice links.

**Aim:** To improve retention and achievement rates, to find ways to include the necessary science without making this an obstacle to success by reducing the problem for all students, particularly Māori.

**Methodology:** Focus groups interviews explored the thoughts of the 26 midwives and gather stories. All focus groups were audio-taped. Midwives were asked to brainstorm about the key roles of midwives and relate stories of science use in practice.

An interpretive qualitative approach was used to analysis the data. Detailed notes, the primary source for analysis, were supplemented by audio tapes for checking accuracy and capturing rich narratives.

**Results:** Four main areas emerged into which the practice patterns were categorised. These were communication, monitoring, planning and management. Another round of analysis extracted meta-themes and science.

**Dates:** January – December 2006

**Conclusions:** Themes from the data provided insights for reviewing the curriculum and assisted in determining the relevant science content. Educators should be mindful that practice should drive teaching.

**Ethical Issues:** Approval was gained from Wintec’s Human Ethics in Research Committee and participating Tertiary Education providers and District Health Boards.

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