

**Examining ‘funds of knowledge’ of pre-primary children as they transition
from home to school in Bhutan: In a context of ‘Educating for Gross
National Happiness’**

Submitted by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my husband N.Tandin Dorji

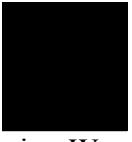
my sons Tashi Wangchuk and Tshering Dendup

and my brother Jamba.

CERTIFICATE

I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used have been acknowledged in this thesis.



(Tshering Wangmo)

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ABSTRACT

The research presented in this thesis underpins two related and timely educational issues in Bhutan. One is a perception that there is a mismatch between home experiences and school experiences for young children in Bhutan that limits their potential (National Education Framework, 2012; Ball, 2012). The other is the effort that is underway to infuse the Bhutanese education system with the values of Gross National Happiness (GNH). These two issues come together in this qualitative study that examines the local ‘funds of knowledge’ of four families in Bhutan. It explores the rich experiences of the families in their homes and community that form ‘funds of knowledge’ that can be linked to some of the principles of the GNH philosophy.

As the children from the four families begin their first year of school, the study examines how the families’ experience is shaped by the school’s ‘funds of knowledge’ and explores possible improvements in the connections between the home, the community and the school that will enable children to engage in more meaningful learning experiences.

The research is situated within a sociocultural paradigm. The data collection and analysis procedure employs an interpretive inquiry methodology based on the key principles of philosophical hermeneutics. The study employs as its main method a visual ethnographic approach through the use of auto-photography and photo-elicitations. Semi-structured interviews, focus group conversations, participant-observations and field notes are also used.

The findings of this research endeavour to inform early childhood teachers, educators and policy makers of the rich ‘funds of knowledge’ available in family life which can be tapped to provide a socially, culturally and historically appropriate education for the early years of schooling in Bhutan that is in tune with ‘Educating for GNH’ (Ministry of Education, Bhutan, 2010c).

