

Contents

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Editorial – Moving on, looking back Sue Stover	3
Letter from... Samoa Sarah Steiner	5
"It is the best job in the world but" <i>Why e.c. teachers teach</i> (peer reviewed) Susan Bates	7
What do teachers need to know? <i>Brain development and high quality early learning environments</i> (peer reviewed) Linda Clarke and Tara McLaughlin	12
Assessment of, as and for learning <i>The challenges of assessment terminology</i> (peer reviewed) Monica Cameron, Claire McLachlan, Peter Rawlins and Tara McLaughlin	18
Languages seen are languages used <i>The linguistic landscapes of early childhood centres</i> Leona Harris with Una Cunningham and Niki Davis	24
Governmentality of childhood <i>'Freedom,' 'Protection,' 'Quality'</i> Michael A. Peters	29
Student provocations <i>Skin colour, sexual exploration and inclusive quality</i> Nicole Pereira, Lauren Stuart and Tasha Taylor	32
Book Reviews: Three educational collaborations Reviewer: Sue Stover	41
Contributors	43

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This issue – #64 – is the final issue of *Early Education* produced by AUT. The next issue – #65 – will be hosted by University of Waikato.

Early Education subscribers can learn more about how to access future issues by checking out developments at <https://www.waikato.ac.nz/wmier>, or by contacting the editors.

Editors for 2019

From 2019, University of Waikato is the home of Early Education. Professor Claire McLachlan continues as Editor. She is being joined by Dr Karyn Aspden from Massey University as co-editor.

Professor Claire McLachlan

Claire has been an editor of *Early Education* since 2006, when she and Sue Stover took over responsibility for producing the journal from Cushla Scrivens at Massey University. Claire is the Dean of the School of Education at Federation University in Victoria, Australia and is an honorary member of the Faculty of Education at University of Waikato, where she was formerly Head of School, Te Hononga School of Curriculum and Pedagogy. Claire's main research interests are in curriculum, pedagogy and assessment and she has a significant body of research and writing in the areas of early literacy and physical activity. Claire was a member of the writing team for the revision of *Te Whariki* and is an invited member of the UNESCO-IBE Early Reading Panel.



Dr Karyn Aspden

Karyn is a Lecturer at the Institute of Education, Massey University where she coordinates the Graduate Diploma of Teaching (ECE). She began her career as a teacher and leader in a range of early childhood services, before moving into initial teacher education. Her teaching and research interests include practicum, professional practice, effective teaching practices, early intervention and infant/toddler pedagogy. She is passionate about supporting the enhancement of quality teaching practice in early childhood services, through her work with student teachers, post graduate students and teachers within the sector.



Moving on, looking back

Kia ora koutou

I started editing *Early Education* in 2006 when Cushla Scrivens and the team at Massey University laid down responsibility. Claire McLachlan and I were both at AUT at that time, and we picked up the challenge of editing the journal which had started in 1993 as an independent project by a former public servant with a long term interest in early childhood, Caryl Hamer. Twelve years and 25 issues later, *Early Education* is about to move to University of Waikato. Decisions have already been made to move entirely to an online format, so this, the final issue from AUT, is also the final printed issue.

Scanning through those 25 issues there are several trends evident.

One is that we inherited a journal that was aimed at working teachers – one guideline was to imagine our readers as having a few minutes while sitting with sleeping children and in those few minutes, they might be able to read an article in *Early Education*. Not too academic. That has changed. But the early childhood educators have also changed. Most are qualified now, and so our readership is largely a community of professionals. We still aim our articles at early childhood educators, but the length of article has increased significantly and the academic reference lists have also increased. A reader would likely need children to stay asleep for quite a few minutes in order to complete an article in one sitting!

Peer review – a key indicator quality academic writing – has become more apparent. We have tried to walk the line between publishing peer reviewed articles – which tend to emphasise academic research – and publishing the work of emerging researchers and active teachers – those who get sand under their fingernails every day! Maintaining both has at times been a challenge. We have relished the number of teacher-authors who emerged through the Centres of Innovation (these stopped suddenly in 2010). An ongoing challenge now is to ensure that teacher voices are heard – and not just through the work of academics, but through teachers researching and reflecting on their teaching practices.

We are increasingly aware of the impact of *Early Education* for student teachers and it is gratifying to see researchers citing *Early Education* articles. Since 2009 *Early Education* has been indexed by Informit which has brought in additional royalties to help keep the journal afloat, as well as given us international readership.

In our 12 years of publishing, we have seen the early childhood sector swell as government policy promoted the professionalism of the sector; we have seen it struggle in a policy climate that downplayed qualifications and professional development; that promoted children's participation above the quality of the experiences and well-being of children and their teachers.

While we have aimed to keep readers abreast of policy developments – especially when there was opportunity for public input, what has been harder is to keep readers abreast of sector developments which reflect challenges to and developments within specific services. There are few articles about changes within Te Kohanga Reo, for example, nor is there much discussion about how the 2011 'Agenda for Amazing Children' led to the Kohanga Reo Trust taking a case to – and getting a successful ruling from – the Waitangi Tribunal in 2012. More recent examples of under-reported service-specific developments include the trend towards corporatisation of larger community-based services, such as has been occurring in some kindergarten associations, and within Playcentre nationally. For example, several years ago the Auckland Kindergarten Association started a major shift in service delivery and teachers' working conditions driven by the decision to move to providing a 49 week per year service to parents. This met stiff opposition from parents and in late 2017 the changes were stopped. But this is unlikely to be the end of radical changes in kindergarten; the momentum continues towards childcare models of 'long day' provision and the AKA kindergarten 'day' is reported to be set to stretch by another hour. It seems that the economic arguments for increased income to fund expansion alongside assumptions about 'what parents want' will likely continue to demand attention.

For Playcentres, the change towards a more corporate *modus operandi* has been driven by compliance requirements (especially the weight of administration), declining enrolments in many areas, plus internal politics. These have led agonisingly to a decision to create 'one Playcentre' organisation rather than 32 associations which had each delivered a version of Playcentre. The democratic ethos and 'grassroots' empowerment built on the back of committed volunteers that have characterised Playcentre regionally and nationally for more than 50 years are being (noisily) shelved and replaced by commercially paid national staff, with six hubs (again with paid staff) supporting and monitoring what happens in playcentres around the country. It is an open question how many Playcentres will survive under this model. But it appears that Playcentre no longer has

the clout to be allowed exemptions from requirements that disadvantage it. Of particular concern in northern New Zealand is the likely demise of group accountability for quality sessions – ie the end of ‘group supervision’. This is based on the requirement that there must be a ‘person’ responsible, which of course provides lines of (at least symbolic) accountability but runs counter to the collectivist ethos of Playcentres in the north. By 2020, all Playcentres will be required to have at least one person with a level 4 qualification – effectively a supervisor.

The marginalising of Playcentres means the diminishing of what Playcentre offers better than any other early childhood service – a place for the growth of parents, especially women. Both editors of this journal got their start in early childhood education through taking a child to Playcentre, staying, getting involved. There are thousands of other similar stories of what the adults who ‘graduated’ from Playcentre have contributed to their communities and to the wider early childhood sector.

So the existential shudders of the not-for-profit services indicate an existential crisis – an elephant in the room – for the wider early childhood sector. Current early childhood policy environment is not a level playing field for those services that are struggling survive. Tutting about the not-for-profits (and especially the parent-led not-for-profits) needing to ‘keep up with the times’ or ‘survival of the fittest in the ece marketplace’ ignores that the heterogeneity of the early childhood sector in New Zealand is one of its strengths. It ignores that the e.c.e. marketplace is diminished if all the services offer much the same experience for families. It also ignores the fact that quality learning experiences for children can (and do regularly) occur outside the strictures of neoliberal logic and marketplace tyranny. Hopefully the current Ministry of Education review of early childhood education will recognise this and also recognise ways to address it.

This, the final issue of *Early Education* coming from AUT, does not dive directly into any of these deep issues – these are still unfolding stories – but we are pleased to include some other thorny issues for our readers’ consideration. We have some original research coming through from current PhD students. Leona Harris updates us ‘linguistic landscapes’, and what they tell us about privileged languages in early childhood settings, while Monica Cameron’s research tackles the complexity of assessment terminologies in early childhood (and interestingly does differentiate between types of e.c. services). Drawing on an extensive online survey of early childhood teachers’ wellbeing, independent researcher Susan Bates hunts for what it is that makes the early childhood profession worthwhile for teachers – despite its many challenges, while Michael Peters offers us a whirlwind history of philosophical thought about education and how children’s play has been tamed as ‘educational’ within the neoliberal policy agenda.

Providing us with a great resource for professional development, Linda Clarke and Tara McLaughlin take us through the basics – and ‘where next’ options – for those

wanting to look more deeply into the connection between quality early childhood provision and brain research. Three senior undergraduate (or just graduated) early childhood student teachers, Nicole Pereira, Lauren Stuart and Tasha Taylor, offer provocations to our readers on the topics of the ‘otherness’ of skin colour, the discomfort of noticing children’s sexual exploration in early childhood education settings, and how teachers need to align their ‘local curriculum’ with key ideas and concepts, including te Tiriti o Waitangi.

And yes – we do have an early childhood teacher stepping up to tell her story: Sarah Steiner sends us a letter about preschools in Samoa and how three e.c. teachers from one South Auckland centre went to find out about them. Finally I have indulged myself with three books to read and review – all from NZCER and all reminding us of the connected nature of education. We are in sector that is worthy of our own best efforts – to challenge our thinking but also to speak our truths.

At the end of this editorial, I am also signing off as an editor of *Early Education*. I am grateful to many people. But I’ll single out two people who have gone the distance with me during AUT’s 12 year tenure as home to *Early Education*:

My son, **Ben Watts**, who designed and laid out every issue. A graduate of AUT’s great design school, he stepped into the role of ‘layout person’ as a freelancer, and in the intervening years, he has lived abroad, come back to NZ, changed career directions, married and more recently become a Playcentre father of three children;

My friend, colleague and co-editor, **Claire McLachlan**, who has a gift for coming through with pertinent political guidance and strong articles, when it really in counts.

Ngā mihi mahana, choa ma

Sue Stover



End of an era. Finalising *Early Education* vol. 64.
Ben Watts - Design and Layout; Sue Stover - Editor.

Letter from... Samoa

Tālofa ECE whānau,

So here is a question - what is your teaching team doing to understand the diversity of cultures in your centre?

For three of us working at Tadpoles Early Childhood Centre in South Auckland, this question is ongoing and paramount. As the number of families from diverse cultural backgrounds increases in New Zealand, so too does our need as teachers to understand and support each child's cultural identity and sense of belonging.

Early on in our careers as teachers, when we are asked to describe our philosophy it makes us pause and think. I truly believe that our philosophies are shaped by different experiences and opportunities that we each encounter and digest differently.

Teaching in South Auckland, we encounter many cultures, and work with children from all different backgrounds. We create relationships with our whānau and endeavour to value and really understand the cultural influences on their child's learning. However, we each know that nothing is ever going to be as real as what the first-hand experience being in the home country of a culture could bring. Seeing early childhood education in another culture and country would bring exposure to all kinds of new challenges and experiences in teaching, and we knew that the Pacific would be the most useful and relevant for us here at Tadpoles.

Three colleagues, Megan Laupa and Valerie Saio plus me, decided we wanted to take on this challenge and started brainstorming with the question of where to go. We were particularly interested in Samoa, as this was somewhere that none of us had experienced on a professional level, and so we began researching what early childhood education there entailed. I contacted several preschools in the capital, Apia, and we started building relationships from there.

Relationships are such a key part of our early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, and just as we follow that in our day to day teachings, we are reminded that such principles extend further than just the classroom. We started chatting to some of our Samoan whānau, including Valerie's, and gathered more information and contacts that way. The next thing we knew, I had the phone number for one of the matai (chiefs) from the small Savai'i village of Sagone, and we just had to make the call. This connection turned out to be invaluable, and we arranged to make our first stop at the preschool there.

We arrived in Sagone for the morning class at the preschool, and were greeted by the preschoolers themselves, the teachers, and a huge gathering of parents and whānau. We were formally welcomed into the preschool with a traditional kava ceremony, conducted by the chief matai. It was an honour to be welcomed in this way, and we were struck by the efforts that the matai and teachers had made to greet and speak to us in English. We watched and joined in a musical mat time, singing a few familiar children's songs in English, and copying the dancing for the songs in Samoan.

We noticed similarities in the way that the preschool started off their day. At Tadpoles, each class begins the day with a *Wā Whānau*: a seated group time before morning tea that is conducted entirely in te reo Māori. During this time we share karakia, himene, waiata, and korero in Māori. Given that we all start at different time, this is a special time in which we all come together to bless the day that we will share. The preschool teachers explained they have a similar start to their day, although in Samoan, starting off with prayers, hymns, and songs. Although later in the day they share and sing some songs in English, this first blessing to start the day is entirely in Samoan.

The valued connection with whānau, family and community is very obvious on entering the village preschool. Parents are welcomed to stay during the preschool session, and on the morning that we were coming, there was a very large gathering!

Back on the main island of Upolu, we had connected with another three preschools to visit. These were larger early childhood setups, and were quite different to the village preschool. We were welcomed by each and enjoyed the opportunity to take part in their programmes and routines.

We had brought activities with us, which we shared with each preschool. It was tricky trying to plan at home what kind of resources to bring, as we really had no idea what sort of set up to expect! It turned out that each preschool was quite different, though there were a couple that seemed more on the same end of the spectrum as New Zealand education than others.

We were intrigued by the variety of curriculums and philosophies that we encountered across the four preschools. Each preschool was founded on a strongly Christian-based philosophy, though operated with a unique curriculum as a base (some used a Samoan-designed curriculum, and



Photo credit: Sarah Steiner

From a Samoan preschool: “Taking on a role reversal in tuakana-teina as we discuss the vibrant colours of beautiful butterflies, and learn the words to match in Samoan.”

the others were founded on a US Christian early learning curriculum).

One of the preschools we visited in Apia surprised us with rawness and contrast to the style of curriculum and pedagogy that we are so accustomed to here in New Zealand. As we had arrived with play-based resources to share, one of the first questions we had was ‘When was the time for play?’ We were direct in asking this question, and the principal was equally direct in answering: that they didn’t have free play at all. Toys are not accepted as learning resources, and the daily routine that is scheduled for the children does not involve any time outdoors.

The second major surprise was the number of children enrolled in each class, and the ratio of children to teachers. The classes were split into divided age groups, with the class of five year olds having 92 children present on the day we visited, and two teachers.

We were a little taken back by these factors, and the sudden realisation that the resources we had arrive with would definitely not be enough for the children present! But we gave it a go anyway, and enjoyed the challenge of immersing ourselves in a curriculum and learning style that was so apparently different.

A learning adventure like this was the perfect chance to grab the kinds of opportunities for learning that we had so desired. We had the chance to take in and witness all kinds of learning; the good, that we will tuck away to add to our

own philosophies, and the sightings that don’t quite match with what we believe in, but help to affirm what it is that we actually do.

One purposeful part of our planning was to try for this visit to take mostly natural resources, and items that could be replenished and sourced locally without cost. Ideally, if we were to do it again, our goal next time would be to not take any resources from home, but to go with ideas for activities to support the preschools to recognise the learning that comes from all the natural resources that they are surrounded with.

We are so grateful to have had this chance, and feel proud that we grabbed the opportunity to make our dream of doing early childhood education in the Pacific a reality. It was an enormous learning curve for each of us, and we feel that we landed back in New Zealand with very full hearts, heads, and with a whole new side to our rapidly expanding teaching philosophies for early childhood.

It was amazing to have the opportunity, and we look forward to sharing the insight that we gained, with our teams and beyond.

Tōfā soifua,

Sarah Steiner

"It is the best job in the world but..."

Why e.c. teachers teach

Susan Bates

"The relationships that I have developed with the children is one of mutual trust and respect for one another. I often tell people it is the best job in the world but there is not enough being done to stop teachers from becoming burnt out and under-appreciated."

(Manager, Private Care and Education centre)

This quote – from an anonymous centre manager in an online survey about early childhood teacher wellbeing – speaks of ambivalence: the ambivalence of deep personal reward in relationships, especially with children, alongside the high cost to personal wellbeing that confront many early childhood teachers.

The historic difficulties experienced by early childhood teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand resulting from a funding freeze, increasingly management and business-directed environments, the change in the landscape of full time children in greater numbers and at younger ages, meagre regulations in areas including working conditions and employment law, along with traditionally poor pay and lack of recognition of the importance of the work – these diminish the experiences and undermine the professional status of early childhood teaching (Gerritsen, 2017).

Drawing together local and international literature to consider the significance of some of the findings from a large online survey of New Zealand early childhood teachers' health and wellbeing, the focus of this paper is principally to explore what facilitates job satisfaction. However, it includes research findings about what diminishes job satisfaction, as well.

The job of Early Childhood Teacher is physically demanding and requires huge investments of time, care and emotional labour (Colley, 2006; Elfer, 2012). Psychological health of teachers is key to the creation and maintenance of healthy relationships with others (Jeon, Buettner, & Grant, 2017). This is affected by working conditions, which are in turn affected by wider influences of government and legislation. In addition, professional competencies and self-efficacy are keys to job satisfaction. Research, new knowledge, work in children's neuroscience, psycho social development, as well as increases in numbers of children

with special needs all require that teachers are constantly upskilling and taking on new information. Continuing to gain knowledge increases satisfaction in the job (Hale-Jinks et al., 2006).

In line with international research, such as Jones, Hadley, & Johnstone (2017), the survey findings illustrate the connections between positive relationships, job satisfaction and job retention. Thus, with relationships at the heart of positive outcomes for children in early childhood – emotionally, cognitively, physically, psycho-socially (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 2015; Rutter, 2008), the stability of early childhood teaching teams is therefore a key component of quality outcomes in early childhood education (ECE). There is no recent data available on teacher retention in NZ, but turnover rates in Australia have been reported at between 20-50% annually (Jones et al., 2017).

The empirical research for this paper was gathered in 2017 from 706 respondents to a 72-question, anonymous survey about the wellbeing of early childhood teachers. The questionnaire was advertised through early childhood teachers' social media sites. The project was undertaken as a piece of advocacy research, and prior to the launch of the survey, was critiqued and approved by an independent ethical review committee (see <http://www.nzethics.com>). (For further information of the research and its findings, see (Bates, 2018; Bedford, Bates, Page & McLaren, 2018).

Early Childhood teachers' job satisfaction

1. Relationships with children and whānau

Why do early childhood teachers stick with their jobs in the face of relatively low pay and working conditions which are physically, socially and emotionally demanding?

In response to the question '*What do you find most satisfying about your job?*', 100% mentioned relationships. 77% specifically answered, '*The children*'. When asked to describe their relationships with the children in their care, teachers were unanimous and effusive. The descriptors were words like: *Wonderful, amazing, fantastic, inspiring*.

Teachers said:

- *Everything that is to do with the people... Embodiment of a philosophy that is cohesive and seeing the fruits daily of how 'love' makes the difference in everything we do. Play ambassador in every way... being in Nature and observing children's imagination flourish* ('On the floor' Manager, Private kindergarten);
- *Seeing the joy of learning in a child. Observing a child accomplish what they may have thought was impossible* (Head teacher, Corporate care and education service);
- *I love the variety, seeing children and their parents achieve something no matter how small* (Assistant Supervisor, Community based care and education service);
- *Working with a friendly team and watching the children developing their theories and becoming confident young explorers* (Teacher, Corporate care and education service).

The clarity of the survey responses aligns directly with the importance of secure relationships in children's early years optimal child social and cognitive development. These relationships require sensitivity and responsiveness from adults (Ainsworth et al., 2015; Cozolino, 2006; Degotardi & Sweller, 2012; Fonagy, Steele, Steele, Moran, & Higgitt, 1991; Laranjo, Bernier, Meins, & Carlson, 2010).

Guidance for children's pro-social behaviour is achieved through relationship building; a good 'fit' between adult and child through temperament is predictive of prosocial behaviour. Children with 'difficult' temperaments may experience anxiety in new, or chaotic environments, and may be less likely to engage in interactions with other children or teachers. Teachers need time to recognise and respond to these children, time taken away from this important work will inhibit prosocial development (Hipson & Seguin, 2016).

Thus, a key finding relates to ongoing tensions about what teachers must prioritise – that is, how they use their time. For those who responded to the survey, time is described as the most critical factor currently lacking in teachers working lives. Teachers expressed a wish for a workload that allowed time for one to one communication, unhurried routines, relaxed and fun interactions with children:

- *... sometimes feels like there is no time to just spend time with the children* (Teacher, Stand alone care and education centre);
- *... the system is not designed to nurture these relationships* (Reliever, Corporate care and education provider).

Teachers identified Care and Listening as positive traits that they brought into quality relationships with children, parents and whānau.

These findings are in line with an Australian study of early childhood teachers which showed that relatedness (collegial relationships) and autonomy, along with staff to child ratios were the largest predictors of job satisfaction (Jones et al, 2017). That study also found only 31% were highly satisfied

with their current workplace.

Professional relationships

Relationships with colleagues are seen as central to effective team maintenance, but also for personal well-being in the workplace of ECE (Dalli, 2012; Warren, 2014). In most environments, head teachers are daily workmates and often managers are too. A team culture is vital to quality for children in ECE. It is important that teachers respond to children's interests, and this almost always requires support from colleagues.

40% of the respondents described their collegial relationships as 'Excellent'. Teachers describe teams having similar values, being 'in tune', sharing pedagogical or philosophical views and practices. Respect for others as dedicated and professionals, 'challenging in a good way' and empowering. Personal traits of honesty, care, trust and fun rated very highly.

A team that can "check in with each other and grade each other's wellness" (Dalli, 2011, p. 236), is likely to be a team which rates building collegial relationships as essential daily practice, creating a warm, supportive and reciprocal environment. This is important role-modelling for children. Reflective dialogue between teachers is essential to understanding children's dispositions and needs, as well as to negotiate practice (Cooper, 2017).

When staff changes occur, and temporary staff must fill gaps, a decrease in quality is evident. As one respondent said:

- *Due to constant relievers, we are simply doing the routine 'stuff' ...* (Head teacher, Corporate care and education centre);
- *"The expectations on me have become so stressful at times that I dream of just walking out..."* (Teacher, Kindergarten).

Psychological and physical health of teachers are crucial to forming healthy relationships in ECE and environmental/organisational factors are key to this. From the survey, one of the strongest correlations is that those who describe their job as 'not stressful' also indicate having a good working relationship with management.

For those who describe their job as 'very stressful', there is a strong correlation with poor relationships with centre management. In the survey, one head teacher indicated that supportive collegial relationships with the teaching were not a priority for her:

I am not in this centre to make friends.... Teachers know what I expect of them (Head teacher, 'Stand alone' private care and education centre).

Overall, 34% of e.c. teachers described as 'Excellent' their relationship with their manager, head teacher, or owners. Words that describe this relationship include *supportive, friendly and respectful, collaborative*.

Good managers are described as *approachable, having*



‘The best job in the world’ on a warm sunny day

people skills, and spending ‘time on the floor’, understanding the centre needs and challenges, as well as being willing to give feedback. Good managers are described as have qualities such as being calm and thoughtful, open, transparent, trusting.

However, nearly 20% of respondents rated as ‘Poor’ their relationship with their manager, owner or head teacher. For these teachers, they have a plethora of descriptors about their manager’s behaviours and attitudes, such as having *‘lost her passion’, lacking leadership, distant, bullying, micromanaging, finding fault, not listening, inconsistent, superficial, lacking shared pedagogy, intimidating, plays favourites, doesn’t communicate, lacks trust, doesn’t respect teachers.*

Some describe particularly difficult conditions as *dreadful, terrible, frustrating, draining, toxic.* Poor management is typified by a ‘them’ and ‘us’ attitude.

Personal coping mechanisms and perceptions of stress influence self-reported feelings of stress, but the environmental differences between these groups are also clear in relation to noise, group sizes, ratios, and working when unwell (due to lack of relievers or insufficient days of sick leave available). In addition, respondents reported a significant stressor was working without additional support with children and their families with special needs. 71% of teachers believed that there was inadequate support available for working with children who have diagnosed special needs.

Opportunities for professional learning are a key aspect maintaining professional currency, yet the survey indicated that for those who participated in organised professional learning events, more than half had paid for it themselves.

Early Childhood teachers’ areas of job dissatisfaction

All of the bureaucratic b***t – all of the stuff we do that constitutes ‘upward accountability’ – creating evidence to prove we are doing what we are doing (which, ironically, detracts us drastically from being able to do it authentically!)

(Qualified Reliever, Corporate Care and Education Centres).

In contrast to the strong commonality amongst teachers’ areas of job satisfaction, when asked about the ‘least satisfying’ aspect of their work, 46% referred to a wide variety of issues that reflected an overall dissatisfaction with their teaching environments. This included dissatisfaction with teacher-child ratios, group sizes, and the physical environment (heating, or lack of air conditioning).

Only 14% indicated that they felt they had enough time and space for non-contact time. In addition, a third of respondents report that they do not have regular breaks (although legally required), and many centres lack adequate staffrooms in which to have those breaks. Respondents also indicated that they found little job satisfaction in

requirements for non-teaching tasks such as cleaning, tidying, and shifting equipment. Added to this, 55% reported having experienced bullying in their workplaces and describe high levels of emotional distress, anxiety and depression as a result.

Nearly a third of respondents listed 'paperwork' as the least satisfying aspect of their professional work. The outputs and performance of programmes and teachers is monitored, re-formed, and measured in terms of business and managerial criteria. This requires that modes of measurement must be found, and those values which can be measured take precedence. Monitoring and accountability are experienced as continuous documentation, whether it be data collection, written assessments, centre self-review, or teacher self-appraisals.

These measures place little value on the 'real work' of EC teachers which requires interactions with children, and the negotiation of often messy, unpredictable, trial and error, and transitioning relationships.

Also important areas for job dissatisfaction were:

- Unsatisfactory experiences in teams. This was indicated by over 20% of respondents with descriptors such as: *lack of communication, workload not shared, teachers who are perceived to have had poor mentoring, lack of knowledge or bad habits, absence and lack of staff, conflicts within the teaching team, moving staff around a centre or between centres, difficulties getting relievers*. Some teaching colleagues are described as *unmotivated, lazy, lacking passion*.
- Unsatisfactory relationships/experiences with management (15%). These included expectations of taking work home, attending meetings and giving up weekends, budgets, filling places. Teachers also described bullying, and surveillance, lack of resourcing, as well as ill-informed owners (usually without ECE training), and profit-driven or absent management.

These findings are in line with the literature which indicate that job satisfaction and intention to continue teaching reflect factors, including organisational culture, efficacy of self-determination and competence (Hale-Jinks, Knopf, & Knopf, 2006; Jiang, 2005; Jones et al., 2017; Lauermaann & König, 2016).

According to Lauermaann & König (2016), professional competence or pedagogical knowledge can mediate a teacher's sense of lacking personal efficacy and can also decrease the likelihood of burnout. Other professional capacities that protect against low job satisfaction and burnout include professional confidence in connecting theory and practice, practical experience, and self-reflection, as well as the quality of mentorship.

Yet auditing requirements place performativity requirements on teachers which can undermine and become a source of both anxiety for individual teachers and also illustrate conflicting values between teachers, and between teachers and their managers. EC teachers' professional

self-efficacy can get lost in an early childhood environment where performativity is reduced to templates that prove professionalism yet which amplify scrutiny, surveillance and mistrust (Ball, 2003; Grant, Danby, Thorpe, & Theobald, 2016; Madrid & Dunn-Kenney, 2010; Osgood, 2006).

Happiness in work relies to a large degree on self-efficacy, and not being overwhelmed by the workload. Also essential are safe emotional spaces to bring concerns to the fore, and participation in decisions that affect work (Lauermaann & König, 2016). Teachers are supposed to be professionals, and this implies an expectation of significant control over how they work. The increased demands of assessment and providing 'proof' of what they are doing, alongside meeting expectations of owners who want profit and may have no knowledge of ECE – these all detract from the actual work of care and relationships. Time spent with children is the most fundamental predictor of professional efficacy.

Conclusion: The importance of retaining teachers

Amazing, feel blessed to go to work daily.

(Team Leader, Private care and education centre)

The survey results showed an almost unanimous response to the question as to why they teach. They emphasise the satisfaction they get from working alongside and developing relationships with children, families, whānau, colleagues and the teaching team. EC teachers describe their job as a 'passion', as 'calling', as 'making a difference'. They are highly motivated and gain personal satisfaction from their role in the lives of children and their families, and ultimately to the benefit of society.

However, it has not been possible to describe the joy of teaching and caring for the very young, without also describing the unsatisfactory teaching/learning/caring environments for many teachers. For teachers to facilitate the multiple layers of psycho-social, emotional, physical and cognitive outcomes for young children, they must be mentally emotionally and physically cared for themselves. The core of teacher well-being is relationships. Knowledge of relationship building is needed. The quality of the relationships should be the primary measure of 'quality'.

Low teacher retention may be an indication that a program is of low quality. Some of the factors which contribute to the downward spiral of job dissatisfaction and poor retention of teachers are:

- high levels of stress,
- inadequate administrative support,
- poor monetary compensation,
- lack of self-efficacy and professional competence,
- feelings of low self-efficacy.

These can lead to low morale, as well as intolerable stress levels and anxiety.

Job satisfaction is crucial to ensure teacher retention, and retention is essential for healthy relationships which build over time with children, families, colleagues and communities.

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What do teachers need to know?

Brain development and high quality early learning environments

Linda Clarke and Tara McLaughlin

The human brain begins to develop before birth and development proceeds most rapidly in the first few years of life. Healthy brain development occurs in the context of secure attachment to caregivers, nurturing relationships, and healthy, supportive environments, which lay the foundation for all future learning and development (Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000). This article summarises three concepts of brain development, as described by The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University (2018), and connects these to implications for early childhood teachers' practice. Information about supporting positive development and implications for effective early childhood practice is complemented by New Zealand longitudinal studies (see for example, Morton et al., 2015; Moffitt, Poulton, & Caspi, 2013).

This article is intended to support early childhood teachers and student teachers who would like an overview of the science of brain development and who would like to use this to inform their teaching practice. We provide a list of accessible resources for teachers who want to learn more.

Learning about brain development: Three key concepts

Concept 1: Brains are built from the bottom up

The Center on the Developing Child (2008) has likened brain development to the process of building a house: first a plan is provided, the foundations are laid and then piece-by-piece, the architecture is constructed. In terms of brain development, the plan represents genetics, a basic plan for development. From this basic plan, the brain's architecture is largely constructed throughout the early years of life, in response to environments, interactions and experiences.

Brain experts describe how, during the first three years, a child's brain will triple in size as billions of brain cells, neurons and glial cells, form (see for example, McCain, Mustard, & Shanker, 2007). The neurons migrate to distinct areas of the brain; areas that have specific purposes such as the limbic system which is concerned with our emotions and instincts, and the prefrontal cortex, which is concerned with thinking skills (executive function), including self-regulation, working memory and cognitive flexibility. As the brain develops, connections form

between neurons and between areas of the brain. With repeated use, and in response to environment and experiences, the connections within the brain become stronger and increasingly complex, supporting children's overall learning and development. Because more complex circuits develop later, the brain's capacity for higher level functions or skills, such as greater concentration and attention, develops later.

Take-away message:

Teachers need to know about brain development and understand that infants, toddlers and young children are at different stages of development but, for all children, brain development is influenced by environment, experiences, relationships and interactions. Further, this knowledge should be used in ways responsive to children and families, ensuring culturally and developmentally appropriate interactions and experiences that respect each child's uniqueness.

Concept 2: Children's environments impact on brain development

Young children's brains develop in response to the environments in which they live. When children experience environments that are safe and loving, with positive experiences and interactions, learning and development is promoted. However, when children experience environments that are dangerous or stressful, young brains become highly responsive to signs of danger or potential threats. In such conditions, children's bodies activate a stress response. This is a very useful adaptation as a matter of survival. The trouble is that, in the absence of a supportive caregiver, repeated or consistent negative experiences can elevate the stress response and impede learning and development.

Research has shown that ongoing and intense stress, where young children do not have the support of at least one adult, can be detrimental to later-life (adult) capabilities, including health, wellbeing, resilience and learning (McCain et al., 2007). The impact of stress is applicable here in New Zealand when we consider that many of our children are exposed to potentially stressful environments. The Growing up in New Zealand Study found that approximately one in ten children in the study cohort was exposed to four or more risk factors that may be associated with periods of stress at different points between the mother's

pregnancy and age two (Morton et al., 2015). Providing our youngest children with nurturing environments and secure, responsive relationships in early childhood settings is one way to buffer stress and support healthy development. There is a wealth of evidence that positive, secure relationships with at least one stable caregiver can buffer the negative impact of stress and other risk factors (Center on the Developing Child, 2004).

It is important to remember that not all stress will result in harm. With the right support, a degree of stress can promote children's resilience; that is their ability to adapt to adversity. Children are likely to experience a range of adversities in their life, from everyday episodes of having a toy taken away or falling down, to bigger life events, such as losing a loved one. Children learn to deal with these everyday and larger life events with the support of caring, responsive caregivers in the context of supportive and secure relationships (Center on the Developing Child, 2015).

Take-away message:

Supportive and secure relationships with teachers can help promote positive outcomes in a child's life, even if the child experiences stress in other contexts.

Concept 3: Teachers matter

Brains can change throughout the human lifespan. However, it is in the early years of life that the brain is the most primed for change and growth. Getting off to a good start in positive environments is best. Research shows that, although attachments to their parents, or other close whānau, are primary, young children benefit from responsive, secure attachments to other people in their lives, including their teachers (Center on the Developing Child, 2015). Close relationships with other adults do not interfere with young children's relationships with their parents or families. Teachers' relationships with the infants, toddlers and children in their care must be reliable, nurturing and supportive. It is also important to know that supportive teachers promote children's healthy brain development by *teaching* children key skills.

An increasing research base supports the active teaching of skills that lead to children developing social-emotional competence (Institute of Medicine and National Research Council, 2015). Social-emotional competence is not a matter of personality that children have or don't have; rather it involves many learnable skills, including understanding of emotions as well as the growing ability to regulate emotions and exert self-control, and it includes the skills of being able to show empathy, compassion and cooperativeness (Goodman, Joshi, Nasim, & Tyler, 2015). Research from the longitudinal Dunedin study shows young children's levels of positive self-control are associated with a range of positive adult outcomes. Furthermore, self-control is a particularly malleable and teachable skill in the early years and across the lifespan (Moffitt, Poulton, & Caspi, 2013). The potential for rapid change in children's social-emotional functioning in the early years is also highlighted in the Growing Up in New Zealand study, which noted the importance of early intervention to support children's social-emotional learning (Morton et al., 2017). These studies highlight that social-emotional skills are learned, and can be supported

and fostered through early childhood teaching and learning experiences.

Take-away message:

Supportive relationships are the foundation for teachers' interactions with children. In the context of supportive relationships, teachers need to plan for and intentionally promote children's learning experiences, including opportunities for social-emotional development, in everyday and natural activities and routines (McLaughlin, Aspden, & Clarke, 2017; McLaughlin, Aspden, & Snyder, 2016).

Using the science of brain development to inform quality teaching and learning

Learning about brain development helps teachers understand the differences their relationships, interactions and practices make. Responsive relationships, quality teacher-child interactions and conversations, and teaching that helps children understand and appropriately express emotions are just some of the ways teachers can support children's brain development. These aspects of teaching practice are described below.

Responsive teacher-child interactions

A responsive interaction, sometimes called a 'serve and return' interaction, occurs when a baby coos and the adult (or an older child, perhaps a sibling or a cousin) imitates. When these interactions are repeated over and over, and when there is eye contact and emotional warmth, the infant's brain development is actually promoted. The baby's brain systems that relate to emotion, to feelings of security and trust, and that form the foundations for social interaction and communication, grow and strengthen through warm, reciprocal interactions (Center on the Developing Child, 2016). Serve and return interactions support older children too and can be seen in the sort of interaction when a teacher has a genuine, 'tuned-in' conversation with a child, sometimes commenting, sometimes asking questions but always listening and allowing the child opportunity and time to think and communicate.

Serve and return is not necessarily easy because the teacher has to take the time to be attuned to the child, to be focused and to genuinely want to interact. For some teachers, serving and returning might involve slowing down in a busy environment, and being intentional in interactions with children. Along with evidence from the science of brain development, evidence from New Zealand's longitudinal study known as Competent Children, Competent Learners (Hogden, 2007) highlights the importance of early childhood teachers' responsiveness and intentional engagement with children to support positive learning and behavioural outcomes.

Talking with children, during play and during caregiving moments, is also important. *Te Whāriki* describes the importance of a language-rich environment, and outlines how language, including using familiar words, modelling new words and phrases, playing word games, and engaging in singing and chanting, can be used to soothe and comfort, to have fun and to promote learning (Ministry of Education, 2017). When

children experience sustained interactions with teachers who are tuned-in, taking turns and talking with them, learning is enhanced because all of these practices support the developing brain.

For teachers who want to really engage with children, we suggest that next time you talk with an infant, toddler or child, try intentionally “playing” serve and return. Be attuned and attentive so when your young learning partner “serves”, you are able to intentionally respond, and then wait for their response. Enjoy the quality and back and forth nature of the interaction, perhaps rich in both verbal and non-verbal language, and underpinned by feelings of care and connectedness. Later, you might like to reflect on the important pathways and connections that formed and strengthened in the child’s brain during your interaction, and celebrate your role in that amazing development.



Experience drives brain development

2017). Those who teach and care for infants may like to keep in mind that when caregiving is responsive, stable and predictable, associations between an infant’s positive emotions and responsive relationships are strengthened within the brain’s architecture (Thompson, 2009). For instance, when infants consistently experience compassion and trust, their brains’ capacities to be compassionate and trustful actually grow.

For toddlers, teaching that builds the brain would involve providing a secure relationship so that the toddler feels safe to explore; it would involve giving toddlers choices, and strategically supporting toddlers to learn and use new skills that they may later achieve independently.

For older children teaching practices that support the developing brain would include promoting “sustained shared thinking by responding to children’s questions and by assisting them to articulate and extend ideas” (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 50). During play and everyday moments or experiences, teachers can extend children’s learning by encouraging and assisting children to explore and to problem solve, to remember, to predict or to articulate their thinking and feelings.

Emotional experiences

Young children experience a range of emotions and feelings. The extent to which children are equipped to deal with their feelings develops day-by-day in the context of secure relationships, where teachers support children to “express, articulate and resolve a range of emotions” (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 29). Teachers might provide physical support to comfort and soothe an upset infant, or teachers might show elation and joy as an infant smiles and vocalises. Teachers might acknowledge and label toddlers’ possible emotions—for example, “you look frustrated”—so that feelings are validated, and toddlers’ emotion vocabulary grows. With older children, a teacher might ask a child how s/he is feeling and talk about why the child is feeling that way.

The teacher’s role in children’s play and learning

The role of the physical environment as a space to explore is important but teachers also have a role to support infants’, toddlers’ and young children’s exploration and learning through intentional teaching (McLaughlin & Cherrington, 2018). Joining children in play is part of this role. When teachers join children in play, they create opportunities to strengthen relationships and interactions. Thoughtful observation helps a teacher know what each child is interested in or capable of, and what is too easy or too difficult. This helps inform teachers to plan for children’s learning and the supports they might provide. For those who might say, “we don’t plan” or “we don’t interfere in their play”, we would respectfully suggest that children’s brain development is far too precious not to have a plan and to be actively involved in their learning.

Effective teachers regularly plan for and support learning through shared and sustained interactions, and review progress on children’s learning (Siraj-Blatchford, 2010). This does not prevent teachers from allowing children to be engaged in sustained play; it doesn’t stop teachers from taking advantage of teachable moments, following a child’s interests, or being flexible with plans and interactions as the learning unfolds. Having a plan means teachers have thoughtfully considered what the child is currently doing and what opportunities, experiences, and interactions will support the child to learn.

To plan for and support children’s learning, it can be helpful to consider how teaching practices support brain development at different periods in a child’s life, consistent with examples of practice outlined in *Tē Whāriki* (Ministry of Education,

Evidence from the Growing up in New Zealand Study suggests emotion teaching may be a key area for early childhood teachers in New Zealand to focus on. This study has found that although the majority of four-year-old children in the study were able to identify happy and sad emotions, only one child in five was able to identify a wider range of emotions such as surprised, scared and angry (Morton et al., 2017). Teachers need to have an active focus on supporting a positive emotional climate and promoting emotional learning during everyday moments and activities, including caregiving, transitions and play. It is important to note that a positive emotional experience does not mean only focusing on positive or happy emotions. Teachers must value and acknowledge the range of emotions that children experience, and support children to identify, understand and express these emotions in appropriate ways.

Learning about brain development: Resources within reach

There are a number of resources available for teachers who want to strengthen their knowledge of brain development and the teacher's role: In Table 1, we recommend resources that are research-based and that you can use in ways that are appropriate for the children and families you work with. As you explore the resources, we encourage you to reflect on what the research and science means for your everyday interactions and experiences with children. We have also included the links to the New Zealand longitudinal studies described in this paper. New Zealand has developed a wealth of research to help us better understand and support the experiences of children and families in the early years so those experiences have positive and lasting impacts.

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Table I Resources

Topic	Resource and URL*	Media form and key points
Teacher-child interactions	Experiences build brain architecture and serve and return interactions build brain circuitry: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-core-concepts-in-early-development/	Videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> interactions and experiences shape the architecture of the brain serve and return interactions strengthen brain circuitry
'Serve and return'	Five steps for brain building: developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/HCDC_FIND_ServeReturn_for_Parents_Caregivers.pdf	Pamphlet <ul style="list-style-type: none"> how to practice serve and return useful resource to inform teachers' practice, and to share with whānau
The infant teacher's role	Promoting healthy brain development: You can make a difference: http://www.bbbgeorgia.org/videos.php	Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the developing brain and the teacher's role
The effects of stress	Toxic stress derails healthy brain development from <i>The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University</i> : http://developingchild.harvard.edu/resources/three-core-concepts-in-early-development/	Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> prolonged, intense stress, in the absence of a supportive caregiver, can wire the brain to simply survive, rather than thrive
Sensitive periods and language acquisition	The linguistic genius of babies from Patricia Kuhl, who is co-director of the Institute for Brain and Learning Sciences at the University of Washington: www.ted.com/talks/patricia_kuhl_the_linguistic_genius_of_babies#t-63123	Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> early exposure to language shapes the developing brain sensitive periods of brain development language learning bilingual and multilingual
Talking with children	How sensitive, responsive teaching practice can support and enhance children's social-emotional skills and brain development: http://talkingisteaching.org/	Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple resources to inspire interactions with children in ways that promote their learning, development and wellbeing
The three T's: Tune in, Talk more, Take turns	Thirty million words – the name is inspired by the research of Hart and Risley (1995) who found that children in low-income homes heard 30 million fewer words by age three than children in high income homes. The children who heard fewer words had less vocabulary than their peers and, when they got to school, had poorer academic performance: http://thirtymillionwords.org/	Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> language rich environment respond to children's cues improve the quality of our language and communication response time "talking is teaching" and the importance of conversation

Topic	Resource and URL*	Media form and key points
Growth mindsets	Kids should pay more attention to mistakes, study suggests https://www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2017/01/170130100240.htm	Article <ul style="list-style-type: none"> importance of a growth mindset how teachers can help children develop growth mindsets
How research can support families, and support positive interactions with children	Filming interactions to nurture development (FIND) FIND uses a strength-based approach to show parents and caregivers (through videos and coaching) their positive, parent-child serve and return interactions: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/innovation-application/innovation-in-action/find/	Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> highlights how video can be used to demonstrate teaching and learning, and to help strengthen effective teaching practice
Support needed for New Zealand families	The first 1000 days: Johan Morreau TEDxTauranga https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1sIVo3BNtM	Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> many New Zealand families need much more support than they currently have
Emotional awareness	Small children have big feelings: http://talkingisteaching.org/big-feelings	Video <ul style="list-style-type: none"> behind every reaction there is an emotion
Executive functions	Enhancing and practicing executive function skills with children from infancy to adolescence: http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/Enhancing-and-Practicing-Executive-Function-Skills-with-Children-from-Infancy-to-Adolescence-1.pdf	Article <ul style="list-style-type: none"> practical ways to support children's development of executive function skills
New Zealand longitudinal study starting from early childhood	NZCER's Competent children study (1993-2011) led by Cathy Wylie http://www.nzcer.org.nz/research/competent-children-competent-learners	Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> longitudinal project that tracked the development of approximately 300 learners from when they were in early childhood education, through school and into adulthood
New Zealand longitudinal study starting at birth	Growing up in New Zealand study (2009-ongoing) led by Associate Professor Susan Morton: http://www.growingup.co.nz/en.html	Website <ul style="list-style-type: none"> longitudinal study tracking the development of approximately 7,000 New Zealand children from before birth until they are young adults
New Zealand longitudinal study starting at birth and continuing into middle age	The Dunedin study (1972-2019) led by Professor Richie Poulton https://dunedinstudy.otago.ac.nz/ Documentaries made about the findings: https://www.tvnz.co.nz/shows/why-am-i	Website and videos <ul style="list-style-type: none"> longitudinal study that has followed the lives of approximately 1,000 babies from since their birth through adulthood over five decades

* Last accessed on 25 May 2018

Assessment of, as and for learning

The challenges of assessment terminology

Monica Cameron, Claire McLachlan, Peter Rawlins and Tara McLaughlin

Assessment, teaching and learning are intertwined concepts and are at the heart of quality teaching (Absolum, Flockton, Hattie, Hipkins & Reid, 2009; Ministry of Education (MoE), 2011). With its shifts in assessment-related content, the revision of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017), provides timely opportunity to explore early childhood teachers' understandings and practices related to assessment (McLachlan, 2018).

Key assessment terminology that are useful for teachers to understand include assessment *for*, *of* and *as* learning (MoE, 2011):

- Assessment *for* learning, occurs when assessment information is used to support and plan for children's future learning (Carr, 2009; McLachlan, Edwards, Margrain & McLean, 2013).
- Assessment *of* learning requires the teacher to make judgements about what children were able to do or knew at a particular point in time (Bennett, 2011).
- Assessment *as* learning, as enacted in ECE, positions assessment as an essential aspect of learning and therefore supports children's participation in self-monitoring and self-assessment (Earl, 2003), where children set their own goals for their learning.

We argue that although these terms may not be in common usage in early childhood education (ECE), the concepts are of relevance to any teacher using assessment because teachers need awareness of the range of types and purposes of assessment in order to make decisions about how best to assess children's learning (MoE, 2017; Snow & van Hemel, 2008).

Learning stories draw on both assessment *for* and *of* learning, as the narratives include both assessment of learning that has happened and formative planning for future learning (McLachlan et al., 2013). Learning stories may also involve children revisiting their learning, setting goals for themselves and planning their own learning (MoE, 2017). This can be understood as 'assessment *as* learning', as it involves children in their own assessment processes.

Te Whāriki (MoE, 1996) directed teachers to use observation of children as assessment to improve the

programme provided. In the following decade, learning stories, a form of narrative assessment of children's learning, were developed for and quickly adopted by early childhood teachers (Carr, 1998, 2001; Mitchell, 2008). With guidance and assessment exemplars provided through *Kei Tua o te Pae* (MoE, 2004 /2007 /2009) and *Te Whatu Pōkeka* (MoE, 2009), learning stories have become the dominant assessment method within the ECE sector (Mitchell, 2008; Zhang, 2015).

However, the revised guidance for assessment in *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) shifts this position on assessment and states that teachers need to use both planned and spontaneous assessment to "make learning visible" (p.63). Furthermore, teachers need to use a range of assessment types for identifying "what children know and can do, what interests them, how their learning is progressing, what might be the next step, and to identify areas in which they may need additional support" (p. 63).

Despite the important role of assessment within quality education provision, little research has been undertaken exploring how ECE teachers understand and are using assessment to inform their teaching. However, successive Education Review Office (ERO) reports (2007, 2013, 2015) suggest that there are concerns about teachers' assessment knowledge and practices. In addition, Stuart, Aitkin, Gould and Meade's (2008) evaluation of the implementation of *Kei Tua o te Pae* noted that while positive shifts in teachers' assessment practices had been made, a potential mismatch existed between teachers' actual practices and what they thought they were doing. They also argued that assessment documentation was rarely used to inform teachers' responses to children.

We argue that research on this topic is important because learning stories were originally developed to be used formatively (Carr, 1998, 2001), and because of the intertwined roles of assessment, planning and pedagogy.

Elsewhere it has been argued that given the vital role assessment plays in the teaching and learning process, it is critical that teachers have sound assessment knowledge and knowledge of the assessment methods they are using (Cameron, McLachlan & Rawlins, 2016; Dubiel, 2016). The heavy reliance on learning stories, particularly given the

evidence that these are not being used in the way they were designed, is problematic (Zhang, 2015).

This study thus set out to explore ECE teachers' understandings of these key types of assessment. In order to

provide context to the teachers' data explored in this article, Figure 1 provides definitions of the terms. In addition, it includes examples of they could look like in practice, and reflective questions.

Figure 1 – Assessment *of, for* and *as* Learning Definitions, Practice-based Examples and Reflective Questions

	Definition	What it could look like in Practice in the New Zealand ECE Context	Reflective Questions
Assessment of Learning Also referred to as Summative Assessment	“Occurs when teachers use evidence of student learning to make judgements on student achievement against goals and standards”. ^a	Teachers using their assessment knowledge of children to make decisions about children's progress in relation to the strands and learning outcomes of <i>Te Whāriki</i> .	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • *How do/could we use track children's progress in relation to <i>Te Whāriki</i>? • *What methods of assessment do/could we use to collect evidence of children's progress? • * How is assessment of learning evident in our everyday assessment practices?
Assessment for Learning Also referred to as Formative Assessment	“Occurs when teachers use inferences about student progress to inform their teaching”. ^a	Teachers using their assessment knowledge of children to inform their interactions with and planning for children.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do/could we use assessment information to inform our responses to children and planning? • What methods of assessment do/could we use to collect evidence of children's learning? • How is assessment for learning evident in our everyday assessment practices?
Assessment as Learning	“Occurs when students reflect on and monitor their progress to inform their future learning goals”. ^a	Teachers supporting children to revisit assessment documentation, discuss their progress and set learning goals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do/could we support children to revisit their assessment documentation? • How do/could we support children to set their own learning goals and document this? • How is assessment as learning evident in our everyday assessment practices?
Ipsative Assessment	“Involves assessing a child's performance against their own earlier performance, with a view to determining whether any improvement has been made”. ^b	Teachers make comparisons between what individual children had previously been able to do with what they are now able to do.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do/could we compare children's progress against their prior ability? • What methods of assessment do/could we use to collect evidence of children's progress over time? • How is ipsative assessment evident in our everyday assessment practices?

Note: ^aThese definitions come from the Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) (2018, n.p).

^b This definition comes from McLachlan et al. (2013, p. 125).

The present study

Against this backdrop, Cameron (2018) undertook a socioculturally framed mixed method study exploring New Zealand ECE teachers' perspectives and practices for assessing four-year-old children's learning. The study involved both a national survey of teachers and in depth interviews with teachers from a representative range of services who shared and explained their assessment documentation.

A small part of this larger study involved respondents from both survey and interviews describing in their own words how assessment *of, for* and *as* learning were used in their assessment practices. The thin slice of data reported on in this article was gathered during phase one of a two phase, sequential mixed methods study (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). Data was collected across 2015–2016 when teachers were still working under the original version of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 1996). Phase one utilised an online nationwide survey, with phase two comprising 14 key informant interviews of teachers from across the early childhood education (ECE) sector. Within phase one qualified teachers in teacher-led ECE settings and those holding relevant qualifications in parent-led settings were invited to participate in an online survey. A total of 380 respondents completed enough of the survey to have their responses included and analysed within the final data set.

Table 1 – Percentage of responses from the service types evident in the ECE sector

Service Type	% of Survey Responses	% of Sector
Playcentre	8%	10%
Te Kōhanga Reo	1%	10%
Kindergarten	33%	15%
Education and Care	57%	55%
Correspondence School	1%	<1%
Hospital-based	0%	<1%
Home-based ^c	N/A	9%
Casual Education and Care ^c	N/A	<1%

(Note: Percentages relate to the composition of the sector in the year that data were collected (Education Counts, 2015). Responses from Home-based services and Casual Education and Care services were not sought during the survey as these service types did not meet the study's criteria relating to qualification levels.)

As shown in Table 1, responses from the Kindergarten sector represented a larger than expected proportion considering the composition of the sector (Education Counts, 2015). Conversely, responses from those working in Te Kōhanga Reo were lower than expected. The majority

of participants held a Bachelor of Education (Teaching) (ECE) qualification (38%), or a 3-year Diploma of Teaching (ECE) qualification (17%) and most were experienced teachers, with 78% having taught for six years or more. More than half of the respondents (53%) indicated that they currently held a leadership role within their setting, which was a larger than anticipated number.

Findings

The findings reported here come from responses to an open-ended question in the online survey, which asked respondents to describe in their own words how 'Assessment of Learning', 'Assessment for Learning' and 'Assessment as Learning' were used in their assessment practices. The results suggest some of the challenges respondents experienced in relation to explaining current assessment terminology and its use. As outlined in Table 2, less than half of the respondents were able to provide a definition that aligned to 'some degree' with the definitions evident in the assessment literature.

Table 2 - Percentage of Respondents Providing a Description Aligned with the Definitions of Terms*

Terminology	% of Aligned Responses with Definitions
Assessment for Learning	41%
Assessment of Learning	42%
Assessment as Learning	12%

Examples of descriptions of the term 'Assessment of Learning' that align with the definitions given in Figure 1 included:

- "I look at what the child can do and document that" (Respondent 44);
- "What they can do" (Respondent 69).

The following two examples provided accurate descriptions of 'Assessment for Learning':

- "Where to next, what opportunities and/or experiences can be offered to deepen a child's knowledge and development" (Respondent 92);
- "Using the information gathered in the assessment to further the child's learning/interests/strengths" (Respondent 101).

As noted in Table 2, only 12% of the respondents who answered this question were able to articulate an accurate description of 'Assessment as Learning', with two such examples being:

- "This involves children learning to self-assess" (Respondent 175);
- "So that they can see themselves as capable, set further goals for themselves" (Respondent 101).

Of the 206 respondents to this question, just 5% ‘somewhat accurately’ described all three terms, while 37% of the respondents were unable to ‘somewhat accurately’ describe any of the three terms. Also of note, just 206 responses were received for this question, considerably fewer than the 295 obtained for the question that immediately followed.

Arguably ‘inaccurate’ examples of the term ‘Assessment *of* Learning’ included:

- “Learning stories, observations, learning notes over a time frame” (Respondent 392);
- “Evaluation. How the assessment went?” (Respondent 363).

Similarly, inaccurate examples of ‘Assessment *as* Learning’ included:

- “Formal summative assessment of learning that has happened. E.g. child can count to ten” (Respondent 348);
- “Justifies what has happened and why it is written” (Respondent 111).

Meanwhile, inaccurate explanations of ‘Assessment *for* Learning’ included

- “To compare against a theoretical standard” (Respondent 104);
- “Helping the educators broaden their own abilities” (Respondent 90).

Discussion

A limitation of this study, especially the online survey, is that it provides only a narrow insight into what assessment might look actually be happening, and what ‘other’ ways teachers might understand assessment, beyond the ways that the assessment terminologies are defined here. For example, in early childhood settings, learning stories may be used to encourage untrained teachers to explore the curriculum as evidenced in children’s learning, or to document “valued learning” (MoE, 2017, p. 16) principally for the benefit of parents. Recent research in Playcentres suggests that learning stories are used as a tool for parent education and relationship building between the assessor, the child and the child’s whānau, with little direct usefulness in formal planning (Stover & deVocht, 2017).

Nonetheless, the survey results reinforce existing evaluative research that raises concerns about assessment knowledge amongst early childhood teachers (ERO, 2007, 2013, 2015), so this discussion section focuses on key terminologies as indicators of deeper purposes for assessment.

Assessment *for* learning is also commonly referred to as ‘Formative Assessment’. This term is in fact a shortened version of the original term, ‘assessment for formative purposes’, which more accurately conveys that the methods used to collect the assessment data, or information, are not

formative but rather it is how and when the information is used that makes the assessment formative (Rawlins & Leach, 2014). Assessment becomes formative when the data, or information, gathered is used to inform teachers’ practices and responses to children. Learning stories, as developed by Margaret Carr (1998, 2001) and colleagues were designed as a formative method of assessment. The ‘Respond’ element of the ‘Notice, Recognise and Respond’ framework (Carr, 1998, 2001) provides the formative element whereby teachers’ identify what they will do to respond to and support children’s ongoing learning.

The Ministry of Education has promoted the use of assessment *for* learning through *Kei Tua o te Pae* as evidenced in the resource’s full title. In Book 1 (MoE, 2004a), which introduces the first nine books in the resource, assessment *for* learning is described as being the process of “noticing, recognising and responding”. Within the ‘Recognising’ phase, teachers’ professional knowledge is to be applied to identifying children’s learning, with the ‘Respond’ phase then outlining how future learning will be supported.

Kei Tua o te Pae also specifically aligns the process of ‘Notice, Recognise and Respond’ with formative assessment. Five references to assessment *for* learning are also made in Book 10 (MoE, 2007), although the term is not defined or explained in this book.

Assessment *of* learning often involves the use of more formal assessment methods, such as tests and exams. It tends to be associated with summative assessment and the compulsory school and tertiary sectors. However, while learning stories were developed to be used formatively (Carr, 1998, 2001), if there is no ‘Respond’ section included or enacted, then the learning story becomes a summary of what a child knew or could do at a particular point in time: meaning that it is used for summative purposes. As noted by Stuart et al. (2008) teachers only rarely included ‘Next Steps’ or a ‘Respond’ within their learning stories, suggesting that although learning stories were designed to be used formatively, this is not always the case in practice. Perkins (2013) noted, however, that summative assessment is not discussed within *Kei Tua o te Pae*’s three introductory books.

Nevertheless, the Education Review Office (ERO) (2015) has recently noted that good practice in relation to supporting continuity of learning between the ECE and school sectors involves families being provided with a “summative assessment report and encouraging them to provide a copy to their child’s teacher at school” (p. 16). Such guidance suggests that there is indeed a place for summative assessment in the ECE sector, and therefore the need to support teachers’ understandings of summative assessment.

Findings from the current study suggest that the term assessment *as* learning is not one which is well understood in the ECE sector, which is somewhat surprising given that Book 4 of *Kei Tua o te Pae* (MoE, 2004b) is focused on children contributing to their own assessment and

promotes the notion of children setting their own learning goals. Meanwhile, Book 10 also refers to assessment *as* learning but does not explain or define it, except to say that through revisiting assessment documentation and engaging in conversations with children and families “assessment for learning becomes assessment as learning” (MoE, 2007, p. 10). The original version of *Te Whāriki* also noted the need for assessment to be a two-way process in which children’s self-assessments are used to inform adult’s assessments.

To add further to the discussion and clarification of assessment terminology, ipsative assessment sits alongside of assessment for formative and summative purposes. Ipsative assessment is undertaken when children’s learning is measured against what they have previously been able to do (Dubiel, 2016). An example of such assessment could be a learning story, which specifically referenced an earlier story and discussed what had changed in regards to the child’s learning over time.

It is however important to remember that assessment need not be specifically formative, summative or ipsative: rather it can be a combination of these. As Absolum et al. (2009) note “The reality is that any assessment information gathered for the purpose of informing learning (formative assessment) could also be used to make a judgement about learning to date (summative assessment), and vice versa” (p. 10). Ipsative assessment could certainly be added to this statement because of its relevance for young children’s learning. McLachlan (2018) argues that learning stories can include both “assessment of and for learning, as they have both summative and formative elements” (p. 49). The defining feature is when and how the assessment information is used, not how the information is collected. For this reason, the original wording of ‘assessment for summative purposes’ and ‘assessment for formative purposes’ is a much more accurate description of the processes.

Despite concerns being raised about the quality of ECE teachers’ assessment practices (ERO, 2007, 2013, 2015; Stuart et al., 2008) and the need for teachers to be critically reflecting on their assessment knowledge and practices (Cameron, 2014), it is now almost 10 years since *Kei Tua o te Pae* and *Te Whatu Pōkeka* were published and no further ECE focused assessment resources have since been developed. While substantial funding was made available to support facilitated professional learning and development to initially support teachers to engage with *Kei Tua o te Pae*, this funding ceased in 2009 (Mitchell, 2011). As noted earlier, some of the terminology used within the resource is not fully explained and other terms are omitted (Perkins, 2013). Perkins also suggests that a potential mismatch exists between what the authors of *Kei Tua o te Pae* believed teachers’ understandings about assessment to be and what their actual understandings were. Professional Learning and Development to support the introduction of *Te Whatu Pōkeka* was limited to Māori immersion settings, as the focus of “this project is the assessment of Māori children in a Māori early childhood setting” (MoE, 2018). Given the length of time since these resources were published and the findings of the current study, it is timely that new resources are developed.

The recent revision of *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017) provides further impetus for the development of such resources. The revised curriculum notes that assessment is a useful source of information about children’s learning and progress towards the learning outcomes over time, thereby making reference to both summative and ipsative assessment, whilst also making specific reference to formative assessment and children’s engagement in self-assessment. The concepts of assessment *of*, *as* and *for* learning, along with ipsative assessment, are therefore embedded within teachers’ assessment related responsibilities as outlined in the revised version of *Te Whāriki*.

Conclusion

The findings of this study suggest that most teachers who responded to the survey have a limited understanding of the terms assessment *of*, *as* and *for* learning, and associated terminology, despite the emphasis placed on these by the Ministry of Education resources released prior to this study. It is beyond the scope of this study to go deeper into the teaching practices and to determine whether this limited understanding impacts on children’s learning. It is also beyond the scope of this paper to consider whether teacher education programmes accept and promote the terminologies as defined in this study. Nor can it be determined whether assessment in early childhood education has organisational purposes – such as relationship building with parents – which are different than those that are normally recognised in the compulsory school sector.

However, it can be argued that increased understanding of the purposes (and terminologies) of assessment for planning would be beneficial for EC teachers’ professional confidence in navigating the complexities of assessment. To support teachers’ assessment knowledge, revised resources need to be developed and made available to teachers to support their learning in relation to this important aspect of their teaching practice. The use of correct assessment terminology within assessment-focused literature will also play an important role, along with ensuring that assessment terms are consistently defined and explained in order to avoid assumptions about what teachers already understand and know.

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Languages seen are languages used

The linguistic landscapes of early childhood centres

Leona Harris with Una Cunningham and Niki Davis

‘Linguistic landscapes’ is the term used to describe all the visible language in signs and displays seen in particular areas such as a local street and, more recently, educational spaces (Gorter, 2017; Landry & Bourhis, 1997).

Linguistic landscapes are of significance in educational spaces because not only are they visual representations of how educators support and value multilingual children’s use of their languages, they can also influence how languages are perceived and used (Cenoz & Gorter, 2006). As tamariki and their whānau move around their early childhood centres (ECC), they draw conclusions about the relative importance of the languages in the signs around them because the linguistic landscape indicates what is socially supported within that context (Dressler, 2015). This also happens in online world: another linguistic landscape.

Young children’s emerging bilingualism is challenging in countries dominated by English (Cunningham, 2011). Thus the presence of signs in more than one language, as well as cultural artefacts in ECCs, prompt and support the use of multiple languages thus enabling children and adults to engage and build multilingual language and social skills (Harris, 2017).

The National Science Challenge

2016 and again in 2017, as a part of my PhD research and work as an assistant researcher in a National Science Challenge project, I visited seven ECCs to build on my Master’s research on the linguistic landscape of an award-winning Māori immersion ECC (Harris, 2017).

A Better Start, *E Tipu e Rea*, National Science Challenge has over 120 researchers from across disciplines and organisations aimed at giving our young children a better start in the areas of resilience, healthy weight and successful literacy and learning (see <https://www.abetterstart.nz/>).

Our research in this nationwide programme explores the language environments of young emergent bilinguals growing up in a digital world. Successful literacy and learning occur across all environments (physical and digital) of young tamariki and are inclusive of all their languages. We documented linguistic landscapes from two immersion ECCs, six mainstream ECCs, five primary school Y0/1 classrooms and the community library.

The aim of our research is to support the richness of these landscapes for tamariki who are growing up with more than one language (emergent bilinguals) through feeding back to our centres and developing a website – Emergent Bilinguals in a Digital World. Its purpose to support emergent bilinguals with digital world strategies, workshops, resources and a blog (see <https://ebdwwebsite.wixsite.com/ebdw>).

A more far reaching aim of our research is to develop policy guidance at a national and international level as bilingualism brings lifelong benefits that are particularly valuable to priority learners and their whānau (Bates, 2016). New Zealand is of international interest as support of multilingualism is embedded within our exemplary *Tē Whāriki* curriculum.

The method of research was simple: two videos were taken around the walls of each centre (one from the perspective of a child and one from the perspective of an adult). Photos were taken of all the displays, with and without visible language. To capture the digital world, screenshots were taken of ECC online environments accessible to the public. Then, in most cases, we interviewed the Head kaiako, two kaiako and where possible two whānau members. The interviews were very conversational but aimed to explore language and digital technology practices that supported emergent bilingual young children in each centre.

This was repeated one year later in 2017 in a return visit. Each centre was then given a report on their linguistic landscape for review and correction. Each report included the number of languages displayed in their centre and online with selected examples of their displays that supported their emergent bilinguals.

Findings

Our research findings showed that the languages seen on the walls of the centre and online were the languages used and welcomed within the centres. For the two immersion centres, one Māori and one Samoan, it was clear that the language visible on the walls reflected their language policy of being an immersion centre.

Figure 1 shows that 24 out of 34 photos of items that were collected from the linguistic landscape of the Māori immersion environment contained only or mostly te reo

Māori. Further coding of these images revealed that of those with te reo Māori, 19 items had been produced by centre. This indicated that the richness of the linguistic landscape was created and driven by the kaiako. The English-only signs were produced by external agencies, such as an independent business or a Government organisation, thus reflecting the external dominance of an English-speaking society in which the centre is situated.

In the Samoan immersion centre the number of displays in English-only had reduced in 2017 (Figure 2) and the number of displays with Samoan had increased (Figure 3). The linguistic landscape was rich in cultural artefacts with Samoan language being heard extensively within the centre and the researcher being greeted with ‘Talofa’.

Both immersion centres followed the *Te Whāriki* curriculum, which is inclusive of the commitment of the recognition of Māori language. For the six mainstream centres, this commitment was reflected in their linguistic landscapes with a large proportion of displays containing te reo Māori. In the return visit in 2017, the number of displays in English-only had decreased (Figure 4), while the number in te reo Māori had considerably increased (Figure 5). The number of multilingual displays had also increased (Figure 4).

Over the year of our research, the linguistic landscapes of these young emergent bilingual children in the mainstream centres had become richer in te reo Māori and less dominated by English. Figures 4 and 5 show that English apparently lost a lot of its privileged position. Figure 4 suggests that Samoan had also lost out somewhat and become one of the “other languages” that have come into the space occupied by Samoan alone in 2016.

Although ours was not an intervention study, the research process gave an opportunity for kaiako and whānau to reflect on their environments to see how their language practices were visible to their tamariki and their whānau. All centres had linguistic landscapes that reflected their bicultural commitment and practices as set out in *Te Whāriki*. The use of te reo Māori was integrated throughout day with the use of karakia, commands, vocabulary, haka, myths and more. Centres with linguistic landscapes rich in te reo Māori greeted the researcher with ‘Kia ora’. Central to practices to support linguistically diverse young children in all centres was the development of relationships with whānau and community.

As relationships with tamariki and whānau are central, the purpose of the linguistic landscape for all centres was to engage whānau and express respect and support for diverse languages and cultures. The majority of centres expressed some difficulties engaging whānau, particularly with adults whose culture was not common in this location. No formal language policies relating to diverse language speakers were in place in the six mainstream centres but language practices, such as the use of greetings in children’s home languages in their learning stories, were emerging as informal policies.

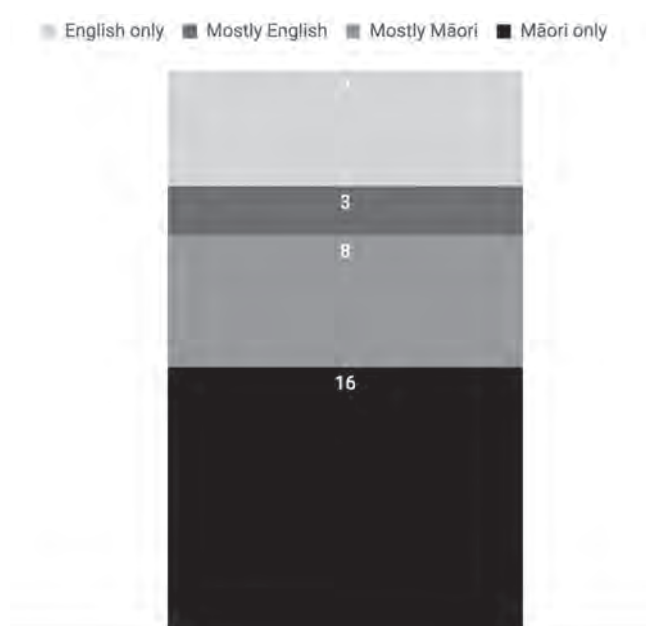


Figure 1: Languages of displays in the Māori immersion centre in 2016

The majority of centres recorded children’s ethnicities but no centre had language assessments or records of children’s linguistic repertoires. All teachers interviewed were motivated to develop their practices with linguistically diverse children, including personal language study, creating linguistically diverse displays, participating in professional development, and strengthening connections with community networks. Two of the six mainstream centres employed bilingual teachers, South Asian and Samoan. The bilingual teachers would often use the home languages with children and one bilingual teacher found this particularly useful for calming children’s emotional responses.

All centres viewed diverse languages and cultures as a resource and in 2017, centres had a stronger message of support to whānau to continue to speak home languages with their tamariki. Use of languages other than English and English and te reo Māori was limited to greetings that were used in profile books, ePortfolios, whiteboards, newsletters, Facebook and ECC websites. Cultural celebrations and national Language Weeks were celebrated in some centres, indicating that the wider society impacted and supported the language practices in ECC.

One centre greeted tamariki and whānau in the language being celebrated in that week, essentially normalising the use of the additional languages. The majority of centres sought support from whānau for diverse language use within the centre, with a number of centres co-constructing displays to support home language use within the centre (e.g. Figure 6). Barriers limiting diverse language use were concerns expressed by kaiako about being tokenistic, pronouncing language incorrectly and using language in the wrong context.

Technology was used by the majority of centres to

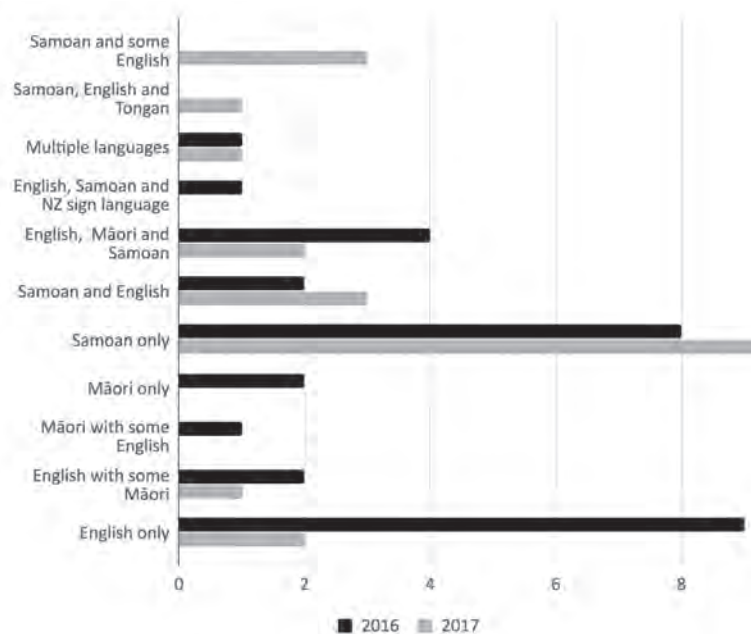


Figure 2: The languages of displays in the Samoan immersion centre in 2016 and 2017

strengthen the connection and engagement with whānau through email, texting, centre websites, Facebook, electronic newsletters and ePortfolios. Barriers to whānau engaging through digital media included limited connectivity and consequent reduced capability to share and collaborate. This raised concerns about digital equity. Common issues were lack of devices and limited access to internet services in the home, the cost of data and the purposeful management of technology within the home, such as restricting computer use until after the child's bedtime which reduced opportunities for whānau to share the ePortfolio with the child.

Before our interviews raised the question, all centres were unaware of children's digital experiences in the home. Some teachers raised concerns about the potential overuse of digital technology and distraction from the conversations necessary for language development. Digital devices were purposefully managed in centres as they viewed the technology as a tool, such as assisting in connecting to the cultural resources available online. Barriers to kaiako accessing multilingual and cultural resources were mostly considered to be the time taken to research them and uncertainty about whether language found online was accurate and appropriate.

During the interviews, most teachers and whānau expressed a need for guidance in the use of the digital world to support emergent bilingual children. Our research team continues to research this area and to support teachers through our website, however at this stage there is very limited research on young children, digital technology and multilingual language practices. It is clear there is a need for more research in this area.

Enhancing linguistic landscapes

Our engagement with our research participants included exploring how displays and language practices could be

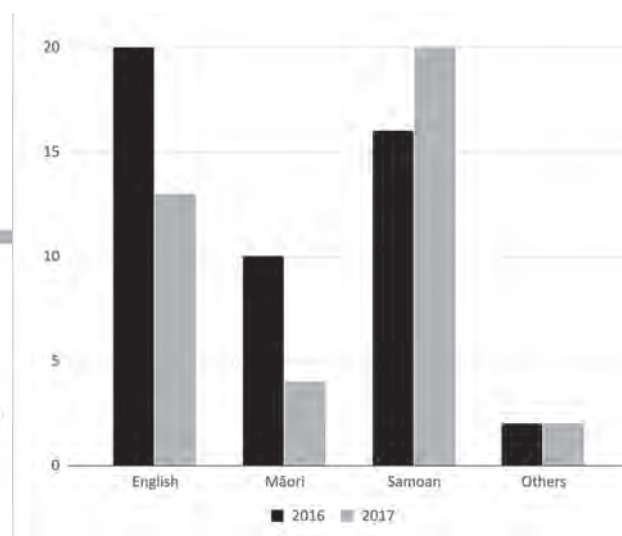


Figure 3: Number of displays where each language is visible in the Samoan immersion centre in 2016 and 2017

enhanced through the use of digital technologies. Two examples were the use of QR codes and Story Book Creator. In both examples kaiako were directed to the instructional videos on our website to support their use of digital technologies in their language practices with emergent bilinguals. Access to those instructional videos, including step-by-step guides, on how to make a QR code and how to use a Story Book Creator are below the next two headings.

QR Codes

<https://ebdwwebsite.wixsite.com/ebdw/qrcodes>

In the Māori immersion centre, it was possible homes had limited spoken te reo Māori and language was emerging and needed support and encouragement from the centre (King & Cunningham, 2017). The kaiako understood the challenges whānau faced within the home and strategically developed resources which included te reo Māori, such as a karakia, used regularly within the centre, along with a digital photo of the tamariki to be shared with the home. With the image along with language it was much more likely to become a part of the linguistic landscape of the child's home:

Really just helping them [the children] pronounce the words properly. That was the reo strategy. So we thought about the whānau and we thought about the child. We thought it would be a good resource to have visible for them, like in the kitchen where they do karakia, three karakia for our day. And then having the child's photo on there, they're not going to throw it away. That was kind of the incentive for our whānau to jump on board, which they loved. Then we had a parent come in and say that "This is the one that we've been practising". You can actually see on the whāriki and the tables who is actually saying it now, compared to where

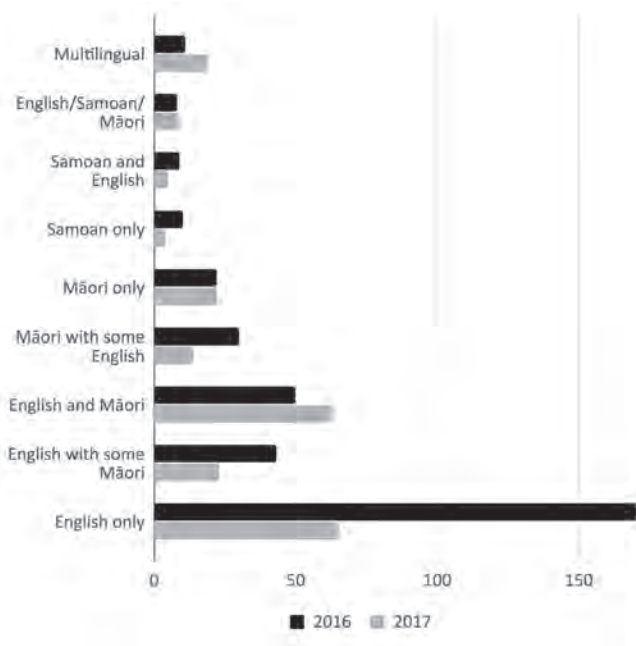


Figure 4: The languages of displays in six mainstream ECCs in 2016 and 2017

they were before, you can hear.

(Māori immersion teacher interview, 2016).

Figure 7 is an example of how to enhance the resource with a QR code linked to a YouTube video of the karakia for future practices. This strategy of using QR codes was extended to support the Samoan centre to co-construct a resource with our research team that they could share with aiga and other ECC (Figure 8).

Story Book Creator

<https://ebdwwebsite.wixsite.com/ebdw/storycreator>

One mainstream ECC with strong relationships with whānau was exploring the use of digital Story Book Creator. The Story Book Creator software allows users to upload digital photos and add text and audio to multiple pages. In a workshop with kaiako, together we explored the use of the Story Book Creator along with our 'How to' video from our website.

This was an extension of their continuing practice of asking whānau to add home languages to learning stories with digital photos sent through the ePortfolio and/or displayed in children's physical profile books. With the Story Book Creator, the ECC could audio record home languages to the digital photos to create a resource in the child's first language. As one teacher told us:

I'm wanting to use Story Book Creator with some of our migrant families. I've only just started with a [linguistically] competent child, so I created an eBook and recorded her voice. The next thing I really want to do for my appraisal is to record the whānau voice or the child's voice in their heritage language. [This extends what we do now which is to] talk about [the

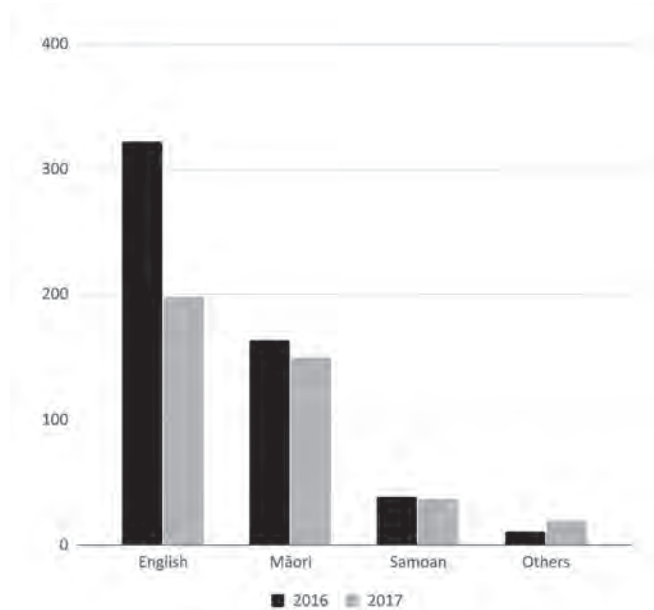


Figure 5: Number of displays where each language is visible in the six mainstream ECCs in 2016 and 2017

child's] painting up on the wall and/or in the [child's profile] book to make it more visible with words in their heritage language.

(Mainstream ECC teacher interview, 2017).

The use of software such as the Story Book Creator and QR codes enhanced the linguistic landscapes of the young children by extending language and literacy across their home and centre environments. Willis (2012) provides ePortfolio illustrations developed with children who have exceptional rights that are also exemplary. These can provide additional avenues to enable multilingual whānau to collaborate with teachers to create resources for their child's multilingual language and literacy development.

Conclusion and next steps

Drawing attention to linguistic landscapes in educational settings, both physical and digital, facilitates language awareness which can support the needs of the individuals as well as groups, leading to enriched language environments. Linguistic landscapes go beyond what is seen to incorporate text, images, objects and people encountered over time and space. These connections between environments and the people who inhabit them support the relationships and language development of emergent bilinguals and their whānau. An important way in which educators can value and support multilingual children's use of their languages is to include their languages and related cultural artefacts in their linguistic landscapes.

Thus, the linguistic landscape reflects the strength of the (formal and informal) language policy and influences how languages are perceived, and therefore used. The digital landscapes we observed were designed to strategically support the ECC physical landscape and to extend it into homes and communities without raising concerns over too much screen time. Our research

paper submitted to an educational technology journal provides more details (Harris, Davis, Cunningham & De Vocht, Under Review).

The success of our research has been based on engagement and collaboration with our participants. It is through this engagement that language practices with emergent bilingual children have been made more visible. A blogpost in our website provides an invitation for readers and instructions on upload images. We hope that sharing images, ideas and language resources with one another will serve to enhance the linguistic landscapes (physical and digital) of ECC in Aotearoa New Zealand in a way that more accurately reflects our bilingual and multilingual tamariki, whānau and community.

Acknowledgements

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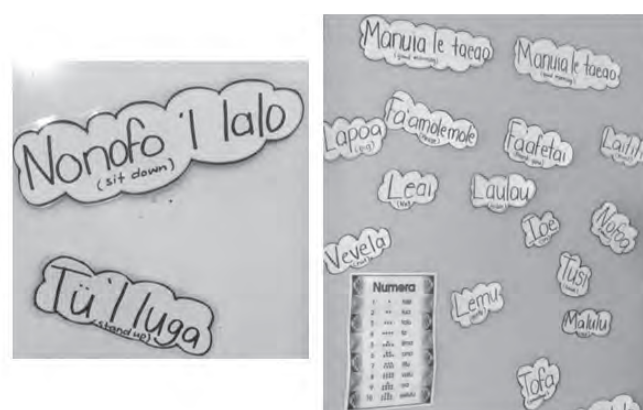


Figure 6: A display in Samoan co-constructed with whānau to support the use of Samoan within the ECC



Figure 7: An example of a co-constructed display in te reo Māori enhanced with a QR code linking to a YouTube video

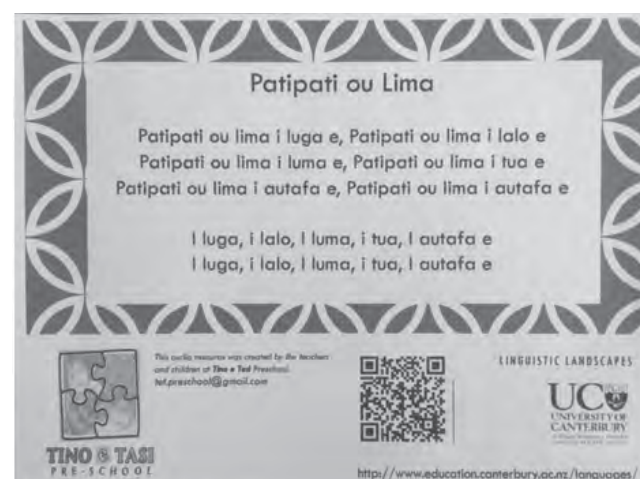


Figure 8: An example of a co-constructed display from the Samoan immersion centre including a QR code linking to audio of the fanau singing the song in Samoan in 2017.

Governmentality of childhood

‘Freedom,’ ‘Protection,’ ‘Quality’

Michael Peters

One *principle of education* which those men especially who form educational schemes should keep before their eyes is this—children ought to be educated, not for the present, but for a possibly improved condition of man in the future; that is, in a manner which is adapted to the *idea of humanity* and the whole destiny of man.

--Immanuel Kant, 1803, p. 15

Introduction: The contingency of childhood

The Kantian Enlightenment grand narrative identifies and stipulates a growth metaphor for the development of children that exit ‘immaturity’ to become adults, fathers and citizens. The famous and oft-quoted line by Kant emphasizes the passage from childhood to adulthood as a metaphor for the enlightenment of humanity: “Enlightenment is man’s emergence from his self-incurred immaturity” (1784, p. 1).

Kant uses a species description of the development and cultivation of public reason. Immaturity is a result of not having the courage to use one’s reason without the guidance of another. This state implies a childlike state of dependency. This growth metaphor is central to Kant’s moral philosophy and our Kantian Western heritage that picks out the concept of *autonomy* as that which distinguishes the cultivated individual who can think for herself and ‘dares to be wise.’

The Kantian metaphor for Enlightenment rests on the popular depiction of childhood as ‘unreason’ and of education as the cultivation of reason in the child as a process of teaching the child to think for herself. Kant formulated his thesis at the point historically when human rights were being invented and the moral worth of the individual was being debated.

As I explain in the essay ‘Inventing Human Rights’ (Peters, 2012, p. 1):

In the eighteenth century, people underwent a profound moral and psychological transformation, coming to see themselves and others like them as human beings who were autonomous agents in the possession of rights. This remarkable change in subjectivity was expressed in the dream of universal equality and codified in law by declarations including the American Declaration of

Independence (1776) and the French Declaration of the Rights of Man and Citizen (1793).

When the juridical construction of the citizen took place in the 18th century, several categories of person – women, the poor, blacks – were considered subservient and unequal. Rights for children were historically only recognised and developed much later, first, by the League of Nations in 1924, and then partially by the United Nations Declaration of Human Rights in 1948 that recognised the need for ‘social protection.’ Fuller and definitive statements of children’s rights had to wait until firstly, in 1959, the UN Declaration of the Rights of the Child, and then the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1989.

Rousseau’s *Emile* argued that the child had the right to enjoy childhood. As Caroline Rhys Davids (1900) puts it in her Introduction to Kant’s *On Education*:

The child too, *quâ* child, had rights to be let live his child-life and enjoy his youth.... He had, of course, to be trained up in the duties he owed to a social macrocosm, but this entity was not so much a definitely conceived state – that ideal was of the past and not yet re-born – as a vaguely comprehensive humanity of independent individuals. The individualism of the time saw only the Child and the Man, the nature of him overlaid by a crust of privilege, convention, and corrupt tradition. This was to be broken away; and the common nature that lay stifled beneath elicited and developed by a wholesome culture that should be all-powerful to redeem and reform. So would the moral sense innate in him sprout and burgeon, till the dignity of Man in the blossom of the Youth should stand confessed and vindicated (viii-ix).

Heavily influenced by Rousseau’s *Child*, Kant allows the growth of the moral nature to develop unassisted in ‘the play of regulated freedom.’ As Davids goes on to remark, education for Kant is “either *cultivation* or *moralisation* of the individual” with the “ultimate ideal” being “nothing less than the perfection of human nature” (1900, p. xvi). She also notes that for both Rousseau and Kant, the ultimate end of education is not “citizenship, nor fraternity, but *fatherhood*” for training ceases when he is old enough to father children of his own.

Thus, following Rousseau and Kant, most 19th century West European philosophers “regarded the fostering of reason or

rationality as a fundamental educational aim” (Phillips & Siegel, 2013). What they did not note is that the gendered nature of rationality and education was ingrained at the very beginning of educational modernity as an exclusively male attribute.

Rousseau’s *Emile* is in part a novel and philosophical discourse concerned with moral perfectibility and the progress of civilization that begins with an imaginary original ‘state of nature’ where the educational task is to socialize the child while fostering his natural and uncorrupted morality. *Emile* had a dramatic impact on the construction of the Romantic Child affecting the English Romantic poets particularly, Wordsworth and Blake and helping to initiate the genre of children’s literature.

Recognizing that the child had a soul and was potentially a human being was a human rights breakthrough. The hard reality of children of the working poor depicted by Charles Dickens and others is very much a factual counterpoint to the idealized construction of the Romantic child which “represented qualities under threat in an increasingly commercial and urban society, such as autonomy, intimacy with nature, and an unmitigated capacity for wonder and joy” (Metz, n.d. p. 1).

However, the view of Victorian English writers was quite in contrast to the Romantics:

... many Victorians accepted the “Law of Recapitulation,” which stipulated that as a child develops, he or she repeats the stages of development of the human race. This belief in “the savagery of all children and the childishness of all savages” served a justification for subjecting children to harsh discipline, and natives of other countries to the rule of the expanding British Empire ... (Gupar, 2005, p. 1).

Most of a century later came Philippe Ariès’s *Centuries of Childhood: A social history of family life* (1960). Ariès argues that childhood is a new concept emerging in the 17th century at the same time as great progress was made in decreasing infant mortality and changes were introduced to the European educational system, with a corresponding withdrawal of the family from the wider society – a privatisation of the family. The result of Ariès’ astounding research is to show that the historical and cultural contingency of notions of childhood; that childhood—and with it, family life—is not a universal constant or natural category, but rather an ever-shifting concept.

While the prevailing philosophical conceptions of the child embodied in Dr Montessori’s child centred approach developed during the early 20th century beginning with the opening of the Casa dei Bambini (Children’s House) in 1907 that came increasingly to dominate philosophical accounts, the reality was still far from ideal.

Jacques Donzelot, a student and colleague of Michel Foucault, wrote on the construction of children in *The policing of families* (1979).¹ In it Donzelot documents French government intervention in the regulation of family. Since the 18th century the family had been considered a private domain. The process of intervention constitutes a process whereby the family became a public institution regulated by public law: the family and the behaviour of children become the focus of a network of social practices and official discourses through the intervention of

philanthropists, social workers, educationists and psychiatrists. These disciplines and multiple agencies, often working in isolation from one another, transformed the family and came to regulate every aspect of the lives of children.

As Gilles Deleuze (1979) writes in his ‘Foreword: The rise of the social’: “Jacques Donzelot’s book is a forceful one, because it proposes a genesis of this strange sector, of recent formation and growing importance, ‘the social’: a new landscape has risen up around us” (p. ix).

In the preface to the English edition, Donzelot (1979) acknowledges that the book was addressed to three interlocutors (and discourses) that governed the theoretical literature in France; these three being the Marxists, feminists and psychoanalysts. He argues: ‘The choice of the family as an object of study was therefore a strategic one, since the family is the concrete locus where these discourses implicitly converge’ (p xix). He goes on to argue:

For Marxists, the family is an apparatus indispensable to the bourgeois order. This is owing to its function as an anchorage point for private property and its function of reproduction of the ruling ideology, for which purpose alone its authority is recognized and mandated.

The introduction of divorce, rights for women, and the child protection laws was a profound disruption of the bourgeois patriarchal family as a bastion of the established order supported by the emergence of a largely male wage-earners’ welfare state. But as Donzelot theorizes the internal transformation of the family that took place with a series of policies designed to protect children and to preserve them from old customs, an educative model that Donzelot calls “protective liberation”.

The emergence and modification of family law was contractualized or put into tutelage with state agencies. The family was not an apparatus of the state but rather its modernization took root within a new form of sociality signalled by the rising importance of feminism and the changing role of women. The transformation of the family required the active participation of women who worked for health and education agencies to domesticate the family and win new norms within the home that worked a more equal distribution of gender power relations inside the family.

Donzelot provides us with an understanding of the shift from “government of families to a government through the family” and, in particular, “methods for developing the quality of the population and the strength of the nation”. As Donzelot (1979, p. 47) comments:

What of childhood? In the first instance, the solicitude of which it was the object took the form of a protected liberation, a freeing of children from vulgar fears and constraints. The bourgeois family drew a sanitary cordon around the child which delimited his sphere of development: inside this perimeter the growth of his body and mind would be encouraged by enlisting all the contributions of psychopedagogy in its service, and

¹ This section on Donzelot is taken from my entry in forthcoming *The Sage Handbook on Children* (2018).

controlled by means of a discreet observation. In the second instance, it would be more exact to define the pedagogical model as that of supervised freedom. The problem in regard to the working-class child was not so much the weight of obsolescent constraints as excessive freedom—being left to the street—and the techniques employed consisted in limiting this freedom, in shepherding the child back to spaces where he could be more closely watched: the school or the family dwelling.

If Donzelot provides us with the governmentality of children, the emerging government rationality for the ‘protection’ of children, to document state regulation of children in the family during an era largely given to ‘protection,’ ‘welfare’ and ‘rights,’ then it may come as no surprise that children’s education and child play have become subject to the neoliberal governmentality of the market where early expressions of play as ‘freedom’ and its necessity for growing up have been replaced by the discipline of the market and its emphasis on ‘choice’ and ‘quality.’

Philosophy, neoliberalism and child's play

As early childhood services have mushroomed, the philosophy of play, especially children’s play, has become big business. It is a sector that came later, after the three waves of universal education—primary, secondary, tertiary—and its full-fledged emergence occurred in New Zealand first with free kindergartens and playcentres, and later, Kōhanga Reo, and then, the growth of private institutions during the neoliberal privatisation of education (Urban & Rubiano, 2014).

Any new early childhood service can tout its ‘philosophy of play’ but, disturbingly, the real underlying story is one of privatisation. As Fazal Rizvi (2016: p. 5) explains:

Neoliberalism is thus best understood not simply as an economic policy, but rather a rationality, a mode of thinking that disseminates market values and metrics to every sphere of life and constructs human beings and relations largely in economic terms. It does not merely ‘privatize’ individual production and consumption of goods that were once publically supported and valued. Rather, it reformulates everything, everywhere in terms of capital investment and appreciation.

In New Zealand, for example, ECE policy environment changed dramatically in the 1990s from a rights-based equity paradigm to an economic or market model based on quality and risk in tune with skills required for a knowledge economy (May, 2001; Bushouse, 2008). ChildForum (2015) reports “Profit-driven early childhood education is flourishing’ and that nearly 70% of early childhood services were privately owned (in 2005, it was 57%).”

This is the 21st century governmentality of early childhood in New Zealand, once the epitome of the welfare state, and after nearly 40 years of neoliberalism, a paradise for privatisation that offers stock market shares in ‘quality’ early childhood education, while touting for business.

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Student provocations

Skin colour, sexual exploration and inclusive quality:

'Pass the skin colour'?

By Nicole Pereira

For my final practicum I was placed in a vibrant, culturally diverse early childhood centre in Auckland. Upon entering their preschool room, I noted the wide variety of cultures and ethnicities that surrounded me. Each culture was celebrated and respected. I wanted to acknowledge this in some way, so on one occasion I set up a table where ngā tamariki could create their own self-portraits.

After I finished setting up the table for this learning experience, the children gathered around to draw their pictures. I had put out a new set of pastels, crayons, chalk, some black paper, white card and dye in front of them. The children were very excited to begin.

As I sat down to observe, I asked them questions and listened to the various conversations taking place. It was then that I heard something across the table that caught my attention. Turning to her friends with her hand outstretched, Aadvika (not her real name), a four-year-old girl asked her friends a simple question: "Can you pass the skin colour, please?"

Now I am aware that to many, this is not something that would be of any significance. I can understand why most people wouldn't even think twice about the statement since it has been said so often in learning environments. However, it did have significance for me, so I walked over and sat down beside her.

Aadvika had dark brown skin like my own. Yet clutched in her hand was the pale peach 'skin colour' that she had asked for. "What is skin colour?" I asked her. She handed me the peach-coloured pencil. "This is skin colour, silly" she laughed. "But look, we all have such different skin colours. There are so many different shades and colours. Is this pencil *our* skin colour?" I asked. She shook her head. "No, me and you are the same brown, but this is skin colour," she explained to me. It was then that I was reminded of my own childhood experience.

I remember being eight years old, drawing pictures with my friends during a rainy lunch time when my pretty Caucasian friend uttered those exact same words, "Pass the

skin colour." I remember the confusion and frustration that I felt hearing that sentence. I handed her the brown pencil. "No, I said the skin colour," she said annoyed and confused. "Well, this is *my* skin colour" I said (sassily, I might add).

This little memory has always stuck with me. I don't really know why it continues to have such significance for me. I guess that was the day that it hit me that anything that was not Caucasian was always seen as the 'other'. Why was that? At what point in our lives do we come to the conclusion that that this pale peach colour is the default skin colour? At what point do we tell ourselves that one skin colour is more legitimate than another? "Naming a single colour "human colour" or "skin colour" excludes other skin colours present in classrooms (Alexander & Costandius, 2017, p. 128) - yet it still happens so often.

I turned back to Aadvika. "I call this colour peach. Just like we call this colour brown and this colour tan," I explained, pointing to the pencils. "They are all skin colours, aren't they?" She smiled back. "There are lots of skin colours in our room", she confirmed. She stretched her hand out and her friends did the same. "See, we all have skin colour but they are different colours," she said with a smile now stretched across her face.

I was really moved by this little discussion that we had. That afternoon, straight after work I drove to the library and picked up a book called 'The skin you live in' by Michael Tyler. I read this to Aadvika and many other children numerous times over the following week. Slowly but surely I saw a few of the children change their wording. It may have been small, but I truly believe that this incident had significance in the long run. Celebrating the diversity within skin colour can have a much larger impact than we are initially aware of.

When I talked to another kaiako about this incident, she gave me her complete, undivided attention. We discussed what had happened and how important it is to implement a culture where all skin colours are seen as valid and important. This discussion that we had was helpful because it opened a continuous dialogue about this topic. We became more aware of the words that we used and the things that we took for granted. Children are greatly influenced by what they see and hear.

This is one of the reasons why some children might



Can I see myself here?

believe that a Caucasian skin tone is the ‘default’ skin tone. As a society, we are influenced by these things whether we are aware of it or not. As Stern (2000) states, “children learn biases from important adults in their lives, from the media, from books and from peers.”

Due to this, the other teachers and I made sure to make little changes that reinforced the importance of diversity. We wanted to make a difference for ngā tamariki by adapting our learning environment. For example, we read lots of stories that featured main characters who belonged to different cultural and ethnic groups and we talked positively about all cultures. In early childhood centres today I know that lots of teachers are growing in awareness of this. New Zealand Kaiako are beginning to understand that “creating an environment rich in possibilities for exploring diversity helps children develop their ideas about themselves [and it] creates the conditions under which children initiate conversations about differences” (Stern, 2000). In many centres we have baby dolls in a variety of skin colours, rather than just a Caucasian skin tone. These small changes are simple yet powerful. They may be subtle, but they have a significant impact on our tamariki.

Belonging, diversity and racism

Belonging is essential. It is a key strand woven into the

Whāriki that our entire curriculum is grounded by. However, in order to include it in curriculum, an educator needs to understand what it consists of. Often ‘belonging’ is falsely attributed to the notion of ‘sameness’ but people “are actually characterised by variation and diversity” (Stratigos, Bradley & Sumsion, 2014, p. 179).

As important as it is to draw on similarities, it is just as essential that we acknowledge and build on the knowledge that each child is unique and their identity is important. The truth is that we are not all the same skin colour. It is one of the many things that make Aotearoa so beautiful and diverse.

You see, skin colour blindness doesn’t stop discrimination or prejudice – it just ignores the presence of it. “Being aware of differences is not the same as avoiding, ridiculing, or fearing specific differences” (Stern, 2000). Differences should be celebrated, not ignored. When we do the latter, we risk sending the message that ‘sameness’ is the only road to acceptance. I truly believe that a far deeper sense of belonging can grow in a centre if we, the kaiako, are willing to adapt our practices so that diversity is consistently celebrated. Acknowledgement and will are the first steps. It’s only after this that can change follow. “It is never too early or too late, to talk to children about respecting diversity” (Stern, 2000).

■ Student provocations

Children are constantly absorbing their environment. Whether they are at school, out in the community, or at home, they are always learning. Urie Bronfenbrenner's theory elaborates on this. It teaches us that "children grow and develop in the midst of society; the people, places, objects and ideas they encounter form the basis of their learning and development" (Hayes & O'Toole, 2017, p.1). Therefore, what they see, hear and witness in their early childhood centre will affect them. It will influence the way that they understand the world around them.

The media, for instance, is just one example of this. I can't count the number of times when the media suggested that having a Caucasian skin tone is the default 'norm'. Sometimes it is done in subtle ways like in the underrepresentation of a diverse range of ethnicities in advertising and in children's media. But also – consider 'skin colour' paint samples, 'flesh' coloured plasters and Band-Aids that 'match skin tone', to 'nude, skin coloured' stockings that are the colour of pale peach. This ideology surrounds us. So it's no surprise to see children refer to the pale peach pencil in their hand as 'skin colour'. Ultimately, that is in fact what society has been telling them all along. Phrases like these "are both the products of discourse, and producers of discourse" (Zimmermann et al, 2015, p. 36).

Racism is a result of so many things. As Glenda MacNaughton (2001) says, "There is not one single 'root' that produces the shoots of ideas that create racism. In other words, we cannot point to a simple singular, ongoing, monolithic process or domination that makes racism possible" (p. 32).

One of the things that make New Zealand so beautiful is the fact that our society is made up of so many different skin tones. This needs to be acknowledged and celebrated so that we don't become susceptible to this discriminative frame of mind and way of thinking. As Zimmermann et al (2015) say, the use of terms like 'skin colour' "suggests the existence of an 'unmarked and invisible norm'" (p. 38).

Many may think that it doesn't actually matter which word is used to describe that colour – peach or 'skin colour'. 'I don't see colour' is often the answer that people hide behind, but ignoring colour is not the solution. "The refusal to take public note of race actually allows people to ignore manifestations of persistent discrimination" (Wingfield, 2015). You see, our differences are not something to be ashamed of, but rather celebrated. Ignoring colour in these instances doesn't mean that racism or discrimination ceases to exist. My aim, like many others, is not to convince children that the brown pencil and peach pencil are the same tone, but that they should both be identified as skin colour. As Stafford (2016) states, "When you say you 'don't see race', you're ignoring racism, not helping to solve it."

We can't just avoid the issue by pretending that everyone is the same. What we can do though is acknowledge the fact that there is no 'set' skin colour. We need to eradicate that fixation that there can only be one skin colour. When we speak of 'one' we automatically validate the fact that there is

an 'other'. We cannot afford to live like that. The alienation of someone isn't something to be toyed with. If there is even a possibility for it to compromise one child's sense of belonging we need to make a change.

Whether we want to acknowledge it or not, using words like 'skin colour' *does* affect children. It *does* compromise their sense of belonging. "Children *can* and *do* demonstrate racial prejudice (MacNaughton, 2001, p. 30)." Not convinced? Ask my big sister who at five years old ritually caked sunblock on to her face so she would be whiter... ask the teenage girls who invest money into products like 'fair and lovely' that are still available for purchase in New Zealand... ask the seven year old me who wasn't able to be any other Disney princess except Jasmine because I didn't have the right skin colour... ask the four year old African American child who refused to acknowledge his beautiful dark brown skin and curly black hair because he was so convinced he was white with 'golden hair'... and of course, ask that little girl who reminded me about all of this, ask Aadrika.

Our choice of words has so much power whether we know it or not. "Peach' and 'skin' represent two different approaches to colour, associated with two different embedded prototypes, and two different worldviews." When children refer to certain colours as 'skin colour' it should be a reminder to society that maybe we need to re think the way we are approaching things. "People 'live by colour' in their daily lives" (Zimmermann et al, 2015 p. 40). We need to be aware of this. By accepting the fact that the things we say and do actually have an effect on people's perceptions of the world, we can begin to adapt our overall societal attitude.

You see, as a society, we can convince ourselves that statements like "Please pass the skin colour," are irrelevant; but denial only indicates ignorance to the whole issue. We have to recognise the fact that the words that we use are in fact a mirror of our mind-sets. We can't conceal the fact that this discrimination exists. The language that we use reveals so much about our reality. Words expose the truth and we need to listen to them. We need to acknowledge what children say and address any complex issues that are raised head on. Dismissing these conversations and incidents that occur in our classrooms is harmful. We need to eradicate discrimination and this can't be done through dismissal. Change is never born from denial.

I am glad to see that society finally catching on to this more and more. It is evident in the little things like different skin coloured emojis and more Disney princesses that come from a range of ethnicities. This has made a difference. Acts like these reassure us that we are capable of eradicating this discrimination and unspoken bias. With more acts like these, we can make a change. As Zimmermann et al (2015) state, "Crayons, it appears, are not only symbols of 'childhood', but also a formative cultural practice with huge consequences for the way in which members of the community come to think and talk about their visual worlds" (p. 49). Therefore, we should give the topic of skin colour the attention that it deserves. "There is so much value in seeking, listening to, and answering children's words and

silences” (MacNaughton, 2001, p. 32). It’s only through the acknowledgement of these little incidents that we see and hear so regularly in our learning environments that we can begin to make a change.

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children’s innocence from the adult world of sexuality, believing it to be inappropriate for children. When early childhood teachers are confronted with children that deviate from the norm of innocence, they are suspicious of abuse or corruption from an outside source believing that a child could not come to this conclusion by themselves.

In contrast to this is Blaise’s (2013) challenge to draw back the adult-filters and instead situate yourself within a child’s world view. She suggests that when we do so, children exploring sexuality appears as a natural unfolding of children’s learning akin to the multitude of other learning dimensions we observe daily. Holford, Renold, and Huuki (2013) reiterate that children are capable of complex thought about sexuality as they explore their emerging ideas connected to intimacy, affection, love and identity. Surtees (2008) proposes that early childhood teachers should be aware of children exploring sexuality, linking it to our role as teachers in implementing an emergent curriculum. She argues that sexuality should naturally appear within an emergent curriculum as it is an area that children express an interest in frequently. However, Sciaraffa and Randolph (2011) point out that teachers were concerned that a lack of knowledge created a barrier for them to respond to this interest in relevant, meaningful ways.

Teachers’ perceptions of preschool children exploring sexuality was a topic that lacked a substantial research base within the literature. This in itself is representative of one of the main themes of the literature – the moral panic discourse. Blaise (2012) identifies moral panic discourse as the anxieties that adults face as being seen as immoral or unethical for acknowledging children as sexual beings.

As part of a level 7 teacher education research paper, I surveyed student teachers’ perspectives on young children’s sexual exploration whilst in e.c.e. services. The research consisted of an anonymous survey answered by eight of my year 3 classmates, as well as four semi-structured interviews. I was interested to find out their comfort level and attitudes towards children displaying sexuality-based behaviour and whether they thought this topic had been addressed sufficiently during their teacher education.

The interviews were loosely time-restricted to ten minutes and were recorded via penmanship note-taking system by myself as the researcher. The notes from the interview were then provided to the participants for inspection to ensure it captured their perspectives accurately.

Findings

For those who completed the survey, the average age of participants was within the 21-24 years bracket, however age did not appear to be a significant factor impacting on results. The two main ethnicities represented were Asian and NZ European, with those from Asian decent being more likely to classify children masturbating or playing with genitals as a sign of abuse. 81.25% of participants responded that they would feel uncomfortable witnessing a child engaging in sexual exploration, 25% citing that they would feel shocked. Yet 87.5% agreed with the statement

Children's sexuality

By Lauren Stuart

Robinson (2012) proposes that the hegemonic image of the child as vulnerable and innocent reinforces many early childhood teachers’ opinions on children’s sexuality. It is because of this discourse that adults seek to protect



Photo credit: The Point Childcare

How do our understandings of children's sexuality stack up?

that *'children should be allowed to explore their genitals as long as they are not in danger of hurting themselves'*.

Religious affiliation appeared to play some role in shaping opinion as individuals who were brought up or currently identified as Christian were more likely to reprimand a child for masturbating during sleep time. Participants identified tactics to discourage masturbation, such as telling the child they were disrupting others or that it was time to go to sleep.

All of the interviewees made reference to the vulnerability of children, expressing concerns that when children display sexual behaviours, it puts them at risk from others that may see. There seemed to be two trends here, that potential abusers may be encouraged by their behaviour and that children could get reprimanded in a way that damaged their self-esteem. One participant expressed concerns that if, as teachers, they responded, *"Wrong"*, to the situation that it might hinder the child's healthy sexual development, alluding to the idea that children were extremely vulnerable when engaging in this behaviour.

A common theme that emerged was sexual exploration as a natural and healthy aspect of children's learning. The words, 'Healthy', and 'Natural', were present in three of the four interviews as a descriptor for children's sexual play.

Participants expressed wanting to support children's learning and saw it as their role as a teacher to develop a safe way for children to explore their curiosities about their bodies. One participant said, *"Children are sponges, they absorb everything that happens"*, as a way to describe that children were testing out working theories, in the same manner as they would for any other learning; that is - through action.

The theme of uncertainty was repeated through all of the interviews; uncertainty about what constitutes 'healthy sexual exploration' and how as teachers they should respond. A participant shared an anecdote about when she was a permanent reliever, a child suddenly began repeatedly touching another child's body intimately and the way it was handled was blamed on her. She voiced her frustration that, *"How could I know what to do?! The topic had never come up before and there wasn't a policy for me to refer back to. I ended up resigning."*

In most interviews, the uncertainty surrounding healthy sexual exploration circled back to the fact student teachers had never actually explicitly been taught what is normal. One interviewee stated that, *"I only remember once where it came up but that was for 'Health and safety' [a level 5 paper] where they had someone come in and talk about abuse in general. I don't think they gave us specifics."*

Discussion and conclusion:

My study found that the student teachers were aware and heavily influenced by the idea that children are vulnerable beings. This is consistent with Blaise's (2013) review of prior research which suggests that the rapidly increasing trend of child protection lends itself towards children being seen as at extremely high risk of harm. My study indicates that student teachers believe that children need to be protected from others observing their sexual behaviour as they could be inviting sexual predators. This is in accordance with Robinson's (2012) review of prior research which states that one of the reasons why adults may quickly shut down a child's sexual exploration is due to fears that someone might think they were 'grooming' the child.

Despite suggestions that teachers hold emotive views about children who masturbate as sexual deviants (Robinson, 2012), the student teachers in this study were all aware of sexual exploration as a natural and healthy aspect of children's learning. These results are further enhanced by the finding of my study which suggests that most student teachers believed that children should be allowed to explore their genitals as long as they are not at risk of harming themselves. This outcome draws attention to the tensions teachers face when implementing *Te Whāriki's* strand of Mana Atua / Wellbeing which outlines that children should experience an environment that keeps them safe from harm and where simultaneously they are encouraged to learn about how their bodies work (Ministry of Education, 2017).

When considering the uncertainties for teachers, my study uncovered that there was inadequate education for student teachers about potential healthy and unhealthy types of children's sexual exploration and play. These findings parallel those of Counterman and Kirkwood (2013) who identified that early childhood teachers are not sufficiently informed on the topic of healthy sexual development. Further highlighting the lack of understanding that teachers have were the results of my study suggesting that centres may lack policy detecting/supporting children's healthy sexual play and/or exploration.

Results from this study assert the need for more accessible education about children exploring sexuality to ensure that teachers' responses are aligned with current best practice. Similarly, centres could develop policies underpinned by the literature that support teachers in responding appropriately to situations.

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- ## The web of inclusive practice
- By Tasha Taylor
- Anō me he whare pūngawerewere – Behold it's like an intricate spider's web.**
- Peter Moss (2016) considers that "quality in early childhood services is a constructed concept, subjective in nature and based on values, beliefs, and interest, rather than an objective and universal reality" (p. 9). He suggests that rather than trying to redefine this pre-existing term, 'quality', this new contextualised definition of quality requires the use of a separate term such as 'meaning-making'. However, this does not dismiss the need for kaiako to strive to develop a curriculum and practice that are of high-quality. Instead of deeming quality irrelevant, individual and culturally contextualised, definitions of quality need to be discovered in order to represent each local community context.
- The developers of *Te Whāriki* recognised the contextually responsive nature of ECE, providing a framework from which each centre must continually structure their own curriculum around the context in which they function and the children that they serve (Ministry of Education, 2017). However, it is imperative that kaiako (teachers) weave the values of Te Tiriti o Waitangi and *Te Whāriki* throughout these definitions in order to provide a high-quality of care and education at a national level (Waitangi Tribunal, 2017; Ministry of Education, 2017), as well as New Zealand's second and third official languages, te reo Māori and New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL). In addition, Kaiako need to engage with and honour international covenants on human rights.
- I propose that early childhood teachers, in pursuit of quality early childhood for the children in their services,

■ Student provocations

need to engage deeply with the following:

1. Rights of the child:

While New Zealand is a signatory to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (United Nations Human Rights, 1989), and the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (United Nations Human Rights, 2006), there is no national policy that informs ECE kaiako as to their obligations in regards to these documents (McAnelly & Gaffney, 2017). As a result, it is left up to kaiako to interpret these documents through the lens of their local context and adapt their practice as they see fit.

However, it is noted that while kaiako should be valuing these documents as an additional measure of the quality of their practice, currently, due to negative views and a lack of respect for difference, as well as a lack of funding and professional development, this is not the case in many of New Zealand's ECE centres (McAnelly & Gaffney, 2017). New Zealand's teaching code of standards requires kaiako to "demonstrate a commitment to providing high-quality and effective teaching" (Education Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2017, p. 10). With the knowledge that this is not yet occurring consistently, it seems that the current gap in policy may be negatively influencing the quality of ECE in New Zealand (McAnelly & Gaffney, 2017).

2. Inclusive pedagogical practices:

Inclusive pedagogy of practice can be defined as a "focus on how to make rich learning opportunities available for everybody so that all learners can participate in the community of the classroom" (Black-Hawkins, 2017, p. 13). Black-Hawkins explains that diversity in the classroom not only speaks of children with different learning needs or disabilities but also those who belong to a culture or language group different to that of the class majority.

The Royal Society of New Zealand (2013) stresses that people must be proficient in their own language/s in order to secure their personal identity and communicate between generations. *Te Whāriki* defines inclusion as encompassing "gender and ethnicity, diversity of ability and learning needs, family structure and values, socio-economic status and religion" (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 15). It is stressed that kaiako are expected to adapt both the environment and their teaching in order to empower each child to learn by providing meaningful experiences for every child. It is clear to see the relevance of kaiako delivering a pedagogy of inclusive practice in order to not only enable the successful education of all children but also to offer them the opportunity to be secure in their sense of personal and cultural identity.

Espinoza (2007) discusses the difference between the terms 'equity' and 'equality', arguing that rather than offer an equal curriculum where all children are given the same opportunities, kaiako need to instead offer an 'equitable' curriculum where the opportunities that children are offered are evaluated in regard to their individual strengths and weaknesses. The author suggests that because equitable



Photo credit: The Point Childcare

Do we have rights here?

learning experiences consider each individual's personal circumstances, it aligns with Bronfenbrenner's socio-cultural theory (Espinoza, 2007). This theory acknowledges the relationships between the many environments in which each child exists (Bronfenbrenner, 1979) and is included as one of the pedagogical underpinnings of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 2017).

3. Te Tiriti, Māori tikanga and reo:

In 1835, 34 of the northern rangatira of Aotearoa declared themselves an independent nation (Archives New Zealand, 2018). Te Tiriti o Waitangi, an agreement intended to unite the indigenous Māori with British settlers, was written in consideration of an existing understanding of Māori rights afforded by their declaration of independence and was signed in 1840 (Ruka, 2017). However, due to the haste in translation (The Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013), many of the promises in Te Tiriti were not consistent between the Māori and English versions (Archives New Zealand, 2018). This led to the belief by European settlers that they had achieved sovereignty over the Māori people, and, as a result, they began to actively disregard other aspects of the treaty such as the protection of Māori land and other taonga, such as their culture and language (Ruka, 2017).

During the 20th century, the use of te reo Māori rapidly

declined and as did the number of people who could converse in the language. Finally, the Māori Language Act 1987 officially declared te reo Māori to be an official language of New Zealand (Parliamentary Counsel Office: Te Tari Tohutohu Pāremata, 1987). The decline in language ability highlighted a societal disregard of upholding the taonga of te reo, and jeopardised Māori's sense of identity as, "the ability to speak te reo Māori is regarded as central to Māori identity" (The Royal Society of New Zealand, 2013, p. 5).

The 2013 New Zealand census found that only 20.9% of the Māori population could comfortably converse in te reo Māori; of these, one-quarter were children (Stats NZ, 2013). This highlights the detrimental effect of 20th century education policies on older generations and also indicates that strategies to save the language, such as through Kōhanga Reo, may be proving successful. Although glum, these statistics also reinforce the power and obligation that ECE kaiako have in saving this precious taonga from becoming extinct.

Tē Whāriki, explains that as a result of the partnership and protection promised but previously ignored in Te Tiriti, kaiako have an obligation to ensure that te reo Māori thrives rather than just survives (Ministry of Education, 2017). It also explains that children must be provided with environments that are culturally responsive and provide equitable opportunities to learn. The Education Council's (2017) code of professional responsibility for teachers also states that Māori students must be affirmed as tangata whenua and that their educational aspirations must be supported.

This requirement, along with an understanding of further requirements of Te Tiriti, provide a starting point from which kaiako can begin to define the quality of care and education specific to their communities.

4. New Zealand Sign Language:

In 2013, 9% of New Zealand's population had some sort of hearing impairment but only a small percentage of the hearing-impaired population can converse in NZSL (Stats NZ, 2013; Stats NZ 2013b). New Zealand Sign Language (NZSL) is often their first language and as such in 2006, NZSL became an official language of New Zealand. This change in recognition aligns with the *Bill of Rights Act 1990*'s statements that "a person who belongs to an ethnic, religious, or linguistic minority in New Zealand shall not be denied the right, in community with other members of that minority, to enjoy the culture, to profess and practise the religion, or to use the language of that minority" (Parliamentary Counsel Office: Te Tari Tohutohu Pāremata, 1990, s.20).

In a process similar to the Māori Language Acts 1987's intention to compensate for losses of Māori people, the New Zealand Sign Language Act (2006) aimed to remedy the disadvantage that came as a result of deaf New Zealanders historically not being allowed equal rights to their language in comparison with other New Zealanders (Parliamentary



Photo credit: The Point Childcare

Do you know who I am?

Counsel Office: Te Tari Tohutohu Pāremata, 2006). In agreement with this process, and in acknowledgment of the then current deficit view of deaf members of the community, McKee (2011, p. 279) states that "for sign language users, achieving linguistic rights is inseparable from realising basic human rights that follow from being able to communicate meaningfully in the family, at school and in civil society."

This comparatively new view of NZSL being equally as important as both English and te reo Māori, the other official languages of New Zealand, presents kaiako with another means by which they are able to improve the quality of care and education that they offer.

Discussion and conclusion

I argue that while quality should be contextually defined, that kaiako need national support in order to ensure that we are meeting our responsibilities. This process of meaning-making requires leadership, professional learning opportunities and the outcomes would be that kaiako can empower children and their families by ensuring an inclusive curriculum which recognises the needs of every child. The Human Rights documents to which the nation is a signatory must be interwoven throughout these definitions, as should be both Te Tiriti o Waitangi

■ Student provocations

(Waitangi Tribunal, 2017) and *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 2017). It is necessary for kaiako to include all three of New Zealand's official languages, English, te reo Māori and NZSL within their curriculum as well as any other languages of cultural groups that are part of their service community.

The learning that can then be offered will improve the educational experience of all children. Studies considering the benefits of bilingualism in children show that they develop greater cognitive flexibility than those children who are only able to communicate in one language (Adi-Japha, Berberich-Artzi & Libnawi, 2010). This added benefit provides further support for the inclusion of both te reo Māori and NZSL as parts of the everyday curriculum within children's education.

This provides a framework for inclusive education that allows each child the same dignity and rights to a high-quality early childhood education. While large, these parameters should not be viewed as extra work for kaiako, but an opportunity to provide children with as many opportunities for success as possible. In this way, the children enrolled in ECE in New Zealand will become the competent and confident learners described within the early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*.

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Educational collaborations

Reviews of three recent NZCER books

Reviewer: Sue Stover

“It is almost always done collaboratively...” (Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 10). This description of raranga – the activity required to create a whāriki – moves easily from the context of traditional weaving into the context of early childhood teaching and learning. Meaning making grounded in a context is almost always done collaboratively – relationships are at the heart of the educational experience.

Extending the metaphor a little further, if three recent NZCER publications are an indication of recent New Zealand educational publishing, then the days of sole-authored books appear to be numbered. All three of these books are collaborations – collections of reflective pieces from a diversity of authors and research. Meaning making may be coherent (or disrupted) – within a chapter, and challenged, reinforced or overlooked in other chapters – yet bound together inside the collaborative project where the individual meaning making remains evident.

As I read those chapters where there is a substantial focus on early childhood, I wonder ‘Who is the imagined reader? – how are formative concepts introduced? How are key thinkers presented and historical events positioned in a broader narrative? How does the complexity of early childhood education come through the patterns emerging from the text?’

Review 1:

* Dalli, C. & Meade, A. (2016). *Research, policy and advocacy in the early years: Writings inspired by the achievements of Professor Anne Smith.*

Cost \$45 hard copy. Also available as ebook and on Kindle.

This book reminds me of a ‘legacy’ book constructed posthumously perhaps for the grandchildren of recently departed loved one. For the benefit of those coming after, what was it about this loved one that must be recorded now by those who knew this exceptional person? So this multi-authored book which appeared within months of Anne Smith’s death in 2016 is an outpouring of love and respect for Professor Anne B. Smith as an advocate for quality early childhood education and as an advocate for children’s rights.

With a Canadian PhD behind her and the experience of combining career and childcare for two young children, Anne B. Smith returned to New Zealand in 1974 and stepped into the political world of policy affecting young children and their family.



With her studies in psychology and sociology, she could speak with confidence about the early years; as a working mother and feminist, she understood the significance of quality childcare as a social justice issue which was impacted on by layers of policy as well as societal norms.

In this book, some of the contributions flow with clarity of purpose; others stumble under the weight of Anne’s significance. Some chapters could ‘stand alone’ as class readings or as a provocation for teachers’ professional learning purposes. Others try to straddle an ongoing social justice project, with Anne’s story moving (somewhat reluctantly) in and out of the narrative. The chapters that I think work best are those where Anne’s backstory and advocacy is included but do not dominate the narrative. In other words, her work stands to inspire others in the long term – tributes tend to date.

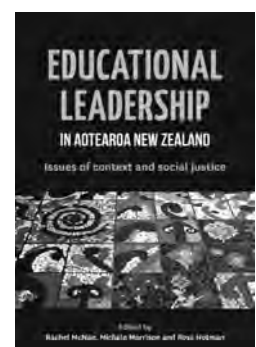
Through her prodigious output of evidence-based writings, Anne Smith’s work will remain evident to those entering the early childhood sector or those engaged in childhood studies. However this book provides the most complete biography of her life (as far I’m aware) and makes clear the significance of her work in international forums. Anne B. Smith’s research and clarity of working towards the ‘greater good’ exemplifies a form of academic leadership – acting as an informed guide for those of us who looked to her to provide the research base for what might otherwise be seen as aspirations without any likelihood of ever being achieved.

Review 2:

* McNee, R., Morrison, M., and Notman, R. (eds.). (2017). *Educational leadership in Aotearoa New Zealand: Issues of context and social justice.*

Cost \$40 hard copy. Also available as ebook and for Kindle.

This book is a potpourri of recent research into educational leadership; people who are identified as exemplary educational leaders are presented in case studies. Chapter by chapter, their work is used to illustrate key concepts in educational leadership. The authors, with a few exceptions, are academics or postgraduate students at the Universities of Waikato and Otago. With reflective questions at the end of each chapter, the target readership appears to be preservice teachers or those looking critically at how educational management differentiates from educational leadership – a difference being a commitment to a greater good and to what is understood as socially just.



There are three early childhood-focused chapters. Each profiles an early childhood teacher (and in some cases, managers) whose leadership styles all emphasise the power of a collaborative community led with vision and ethical/moral clarity. The e.c.e. leaders all have a drive to improve the well-being of families and their children; they can develop and sustain relationships with teaching teams, parents and community groups; and importantly, they can role model both professional risk-taking, as well as management of 'the self'. A commitment to a community means welcoming everyone – regardless. This may require teachers to work closely with parents and with outside agencies when 'everyone' includes children with significant learning or behavioural challenges.

In these case studies, leadership shows bottom-up movement – people come into leadership positions from within the centre community. Parents develop skills and discover talents. Novice teachers grow into pedagogical and community leaders. Careers are launched. Mentoring occurs.

Interestingly, all three case studies are in not-for-profit services. Two of the case studies focus on early childhood services which were brought back from the brink of closure; moral, community-building and pragmatic leadership decisions are illustrated.

What is missing for me is analysis of how the marketplace of early childhood impacts on services; it is recognised but not examined. It appears to be a given – that the marketplace of e.c.e. will favour some services over others. For example, in order to build its roll and remain financially viable, a sessional service has to turn its back on its principled decision to encourage children to have afternoons with family; a 'wrong side of the track' kindergarten is threatened with closure because its small roll reflects something like 'white flight', or perhaps 'flight from not nice children and their families'. In addition to the instability of funding that comes from a fluctuating roll, leaders in early childhood services have the additional complexities of working with un/under-qualified teachers and in some cases high turnover of staff. These factors are less prevalent in the compulsory sector and speak to systemic issues within e.c.e. that make even more complex the already complex area of educational leadership – pedagogically and strategically. This is where the next NZCER book is particularly welcome as it provides tools for unpacking the reality that education does not 'work' for everyone.

Review 3

* Mutch, C. & Tatebe, J. (eds.).
(2017) *Understanding enduring ideas in education: A response to those who just want to be a teacher*.

Cost \$45 hard copy.

This is a ready-made book for any education student wanting to understand why 'educational philosophy' has any relevance to them. It comes complete with reflective questions, a glossary and index, and argues the case for engaging with questions that never go away. Critical theory is introduced and

helpfully visualised as an attempt to recognise 'the architecture of ideas'.

The book's many authors – all from University of Auckland – manage to contextualise the big educational ideas into the New Zealand context and usually remain comprehensible. Their writings are organised into three sections which focus on the big philosophical urges in education: Progressive Education, Liberal Education and Socially Critical Perspectives.

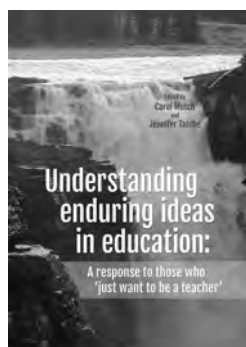
Reading this book, I found myself finding much food for thought in the first two chapters. The first chapter provides a coherent introduction to the constructed nature of education; that it is something 'we make up'; it does not have to exist. As such, education is always in the 'invention stage'; it is not a 'fully formed object' waiting to be discovered (p. 10). Teacher education, before and after qualifying, has to include recognition of the importance of dispositions for moral and ethical thinking (especially important in the face of technical solutions to teaching dilemmas) and the importance of contextual underpinnings that shape the teaching/learning situation.

Focused on Progressive Education, the second chapter is one of the best locally written accounts of John Dewey's espousal of education as the crucible for the necessary regeneration of democracy through education and its impact in Aotearoa NZ. The author offers a well written, easily comprehensible explanation of Dewey's espousal that the interdependence of self and group is a key to the democratic project within education. Early childhood gets a fair exposure which reflects the importance of progressive ideas in the historical shaping of the sector, especially in this country.

The book shows evidence of thoughtful co-ordination. There is a useful index and a glossary (although the glossary isn't complete which is a shame). At various points, the earnest academic flow is interrupted by poetry (while I like the idea of it, I'm not sure of its value in deepening the reader's grasp of key ideas, however). At their best, these chapters provide segues between the reader and the big questions of education. Diagrams and tables are used effectively to convey complex layered concepts, for example, in visualising kaupapa Maori methodologies. Some chapters are harder to read – I'm guessing some authors have tried to rewrite chapters from their postgraduate studies (theses?) in order to reach a wider audience. This is not entirely successful; the undermotivated reader is likely to skip through paragraphs too dense with references to allow a narrative to flow.

In conclusion – all three books will be of interest to libraries and early childhood teacher educators. If I were an early childhood teacher looking for one book to get, I'd choose the Anne Smith book – her life in e.c.e. illustrates the issues and moral backbone of the sector. The book is provocative.

NZCER is to be commended for continuing to bring out new local educational books. Despite the ease of 'self publishing' online, the kudos of moving through the gatekeeping of a publishing house like NZCER still enhances the quality of this collaborative project in which we can recognise as a raranga-like creation.



Contributors

Susan Bates is a registered early childhood teacher and an independent researcher. The founder of Teachers Advocacy Group, Susan's advocacy for the wellbeing of teachers and children, is driven by an aspiration for the protection of human rights, social justice and equity in education.

Monica Cameron is a former kindergarten teacher and professional development facilitator now teaching in the Institute of Education at Massey University and has recently submitted a doctoral thesis exploring the assessment of four-year-old children's learning.

Linda Clarke is a PhD student, and a senior tutor in Massey University's Institute of Education. Linda's research interests include teachers' professional development and teaching practices that meet the unique needs of toddlers. As part of her PhD, Linda plans to investigate practice-based coaching to promote teaching practices that enhance toddlers' social-emotional competence.

Una Cunningham was Associate Professor in the University of Canterbury and in 2018 she moved to become Professor of Multilingualism in Education at Uppsala University in Sweden. Her research interests are in multilingualism and digitally enhanced language learning and teaching. Una was the Co-Principal Investigator leading the research strand into 'Emergent bilinguals in the digital world' from 2015-2017.

Niki Davis is Distinguished Professor of e-Learning at the University of Canterbury. She is the Principal Investigator leading the research strand into 'Emergent bilinguals in the digital world' and was a founding member of the leadership team who identified this National Science Challenge, *A Better Start, E Tipu E Rea* in 2015.

Leona Harris is a PhD student at the University of Canterbury and the lead research assistant with the research team led by Niki Davis and Una Cunningham. She is also an experienced school teacher and has experience teaching English as a foreign language in tertiary education. Leona's MEd thesis developed the methodology deployed in this study for gathering the linguistic landscapes in physical and digital worlds.

Claire McLachlan is Head of School, Te Hononga School of Curriculum and Pedagogy at the University of Waikato. Her research interests are in curriculum, pedagogy, assessment and evaluation and she was a named writer of the update of Te Whāriki. She is an editor of *Early Education*.

Tara McLaughlin, Ph.D., is a Senior Lecturer in the Institute of Education at Massey University. As a teacher, teacher educator, and researcher in Early Years,

she is passionate about supporting learning environments that promote inclusive and equitable opportunities for all children and families.

Kia Ora, my name is **Nicole Pereira**. I am a 22 year old New Zealander of Indian ethnicity who was born in Hong Kong and I have recently completed my B Ed ECE at AUT. Now I spend the majority of my time at my happy place - 'The Point', which is the Early Childhood centre where I have been teaching for the past three years.

Michael A. Peters is Professor at the Wilf Malcolm Institute for Educational Research, Policy, Cultural and Social Studies in Education, University of Waikato.

Peter Rawlins is a senior lecturer at the Institute of Education at Massey University. His research interests include assessment, educational policy, mathematics education and mixed methods research.

Sarah Steiner has worked in the early childhood sector for over ten years, in a colourful and diverse range of settings - bilingual, total immersion, refugee education, and mainstream. Her recent Masters research and current practice are concerned with early childhood in Pasifika contexts and the bicultural aspects of the New Zealand early childhood curriculum. She has a particular focus on implementing curricular strands pertaining to Te Tiriti o Waitangi and te ao Māori.

Sue Stover is a senior lecturer and programme co-ordinator for the early childhood teacher education programme at Auckland University of Technology. She is regularly attending Playcentre with her grandchildren, and is an editor of *Early Education*.

Lauren Stuart - I have been in the Early Childhood sector for six years, working in a childcare centre and studying part-time Auckland University of Technology. Being a long term student teacher has supported me in developing a critical eye and a passion for deconstructing discourses to better understand the human experience. I am particularly interested in sustainability, both environmental and social.

Tasha Taylor has been working in early childhood for the past four years and is currently in the final semester of her BEd(Tchg)Ed at Victoria University in Wellington. Through her teaching experience she has worked with children from a variety of cultural backgrounds and with diverse needs. This has led to her developing a passion for exploring and implementing techniques to create an inclusive environment in which every child and their whānau can find belonging.



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