Contents

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Advisory Board

Guest Editor

Editors

Design and layout:

Our thanks to our reviewers:

The covers:

Subscriptions

Contributions

An EYE on collaboration

Collaboration is the current 'buzz' word in education. Teachers are encouraged to collaborate with the children's whānau to improve their learning outcomes; teachers are forming collaborative learning clusters with other sector teachers to discuss teaching and learning in communities; academics are collaborating with teachers on initiatives and research projects; universities are co-teaching programmes and sharing research grants.

Common sense tells us that collaboration is a successful model. But why has it been so slow to be taken up, resisted, and often times finally agreed to as the result of a funding incentive?

In ECE we have romanticised our own sector. We have never been good at collaborating with each other. Historically, Kindergarten and Playcentre vied for parents and who had the best programme for children. When the kindergarten and childcare unions amalgamated, there was resistance on both sides. Indeed, we did not have a ECE sector at all prior to the merger of childcare into the then Department of Education (1986); all services were treated and thought about separately.

In the ECE sector today, the neoliberal funding models, market-driven provision of ECE, and share market profits continue to drive a wedge in collaboration within our own sector, and widen the gap between our sector and the compulsory sectors.

However, there are pockets of successful collaborations in New Zealand and internationally and this journal presents just such examples. This volume of *Early Education* has a distinctive Canterbury and collaborative flavour about it, as most of the writers are from the Early Years Enquiry (EYE) Research Group based in Christchurch. The group, founded in 2008, aims to promote enquiry that expands opportunities for children in their early years to reach their full potential. Our enquiry is founded on respect for the rights, dignity, worth, and views of children. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is a foundation document for the activities of the group.

To achieve these aims the EYE group is an interdisciplinary forum for enquiry into children's issues in the early years. Members of the EYE research group are involved in collaborative writing, research, supporting early years education in the Canterbury region, and hosting regular events for professionals interested in early years education. Members of the group are from the University of Canterbury, Canterbury Westland Kindergarten Association (Kidsfirst), Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association, New Zealand College of Early Childhood Education, CORE, the Tertiary College, and the Ministry of Education.

Each year the EYE group hosts THE GATHERING, a one-day event for teachers to talk together about investigating teaching and learning in the early years.

Other activities have included hosting international visitors and their presentations, running one-day workshops, and establishing a reading group. Joint writing and promotion of early years education in Canterbury have been recent initiatives within the group. The articles in this volume provide examples of the diverse perspectives and topics that we bring together to improve early childhood education for children and whānau.

Shil Bae discusses a way of being, described as 'Āta', within her kindergarten context. Speaking from a teacher's perspective, she demonstrates the shift in pedagogical practice and relationships with whānau as the teachers developed a new language around assessment and explored new ways of working alongside parents.

Raewyn Penman, also from the kindergarten context, explores the effectiveness of e-portfolios for meaningful connections with parents and extended whānau. Sharing the results from a four month trial in six kindergartens, she highlights both the teachers' and the parents' perspectives on using this form of assessment feedback. As more centres are moving to e-portolios, Penman's article will be a helpful introduction.

Rachael Burke describes her ethnographic research conducted at an early childhood centre in New Zealand and a kindergarten in Japan, and discusses how the implicit cultural beliefs supporting children to achieve independence in each early childhood context are expressed differently by each culture. She argues that expectations regarding independence (*jiritsu*) in the Japanese early childhood context are concerned with the ability of children to become self-reliant. In contrast, the New Zealand centre reflects interpretations of independence as freedom from control and an emphasis on utilising individual liberty to make choices.

Christine Reitveld presents case study research which clearly shows that the teachers' attitudes and perspectives

always make the difference for children's experiences. Both how the other children interact with the children with Down Syndrome and the child experiences others, were influenced by the teachers' own attitudes. Reitveld provides vignettes which demonstrate when inclusion does and does not work for children.

Betts provides a policy analysis by revisiting "Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki. A 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education" (Ministry of Education, 2002). She argues that the discourses of neoliberalism have defined what it means to be a teacher in ECE in New Zealand, and demonstrates how policy has reinforced this view.

My article, with Sarah Te One and all at the Whanganui Central Baptist Kindergarten and Early Learning Centres, draws on a two-year research study exploring active adult participation in early childhood centres. We use findings to demonstrate Rogoff et al.'s (2007) new theoretical model – a prism. We argue that this model is a useful one for analysing all aspects of ECE pedagogy and management structures.

The *Letter from Vancouver*, and the book reviews, also capture the spirit of collaboration. In both the authors and the content the topics are different examples of collaborations. The Canadian writers (Prof Hillel Goelman, and Dr. Mari Pighini) have worked collaboratively with me over many years, on various research and other projects, and were willing to capture that collaboration in working with this journal issue.

Alison Warren is also an EYE member although based in Nelson. Both books reviewed have different collaborations as their edited kaupapa: Duncan and Te One have working with families and communities, and Moss discusses the complexity of collaborations with compulsory education.

The Early Childhood Convention is another collaboration. From its beginnings in the 1970s, it has been a collaboration of early childhood organisations, teachers, researchers and academics. When the Canterbury earthquakes cancelled the 2011 Convention, colleagues in the North stepped up to ensure the Convention could continue in 2015 in Rotorua. Its theme is "He Waiwhakariporipo – Making waves in Early Childhood - Surviving the storm" which captures not only the tumult of living amidst earthquakes but the challenges of living in uncertain times. It is also a reminder of how interdependent we are and how much more we can achieve when we collaborate.

Judith Duncan

Guest Editor

For more information about Early Years Enquiry (EYE), visit: http://www.education.canterbury.ac.nz/research_labs/eye/index.shtml

To learn more about Judith's recent research and especially her work with the Whanganui Central Baptist Kindergartens, there are a number of interesting YouTube videos.

Parents, Participation and Partnership (Parts 1 and 2): https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VLvGTNKtk94 and https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ADblpJCKhr0

Seeing and Being Seen: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ylbt1_cUmAE

Learning Outcomes: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fe_B0BS7LBU

Intentional Teaching: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N9l9S97MRaY

Embedded in the community: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cLDDFedc0zM

Investigating how adult participation:?
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V4baEQTYyy8

Letter from Vancouver

Dear colleagues in Aotearoa New Zealand

This feels very much like bringing coals to Newcastle to write a letter from Vancouver that touches on the benefits of collaboration for research, pedagogy and teaching in ECE, given how much I have learned from the experiences and accomplishments of early childhood professionals, researchers, parents and administrators in Aotearoa/New Zealand.

I don't know that I can add my voice to those who stress the importance of collaboration in ECE but in this letter I hope that I can provide a number of different examples that we have learned from in Vancouver.

I'll focus my remarks on two of our more recent collaborative ventures. The CHILD Project (Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development) consisted of ten complementary research studies in the area of early childhood development. Each of the ten teams had two co-leaders: an academic researcher and community-researchers. Over the five years of the project we found that these collaborations between university-based academic researchers and educators and community-based professionals greatly enriched both sets of collaborative partners.

Researchers found that the most efficient way to ensure that their research was meeting community needs was to include community-based representatives in identifying their most pressing research questions. As 'front-line' workers, the community-based professionals were in an ideal position to observe the implementation of programs and policies and the impacts of those programs and policies on children and families. In turn, the community-based professionals appreciated the expertise and the skills that the university-based professionals brought to the table.

We also learned that it was critical to create many different kinds of opportunities for discussion, sharing, for (dis-)agreement and consensus building. We encountered situations where academic researchers would raise what they thought were compelling research questions, only to be told by their community partners that, "We already know the answer to that." And so the search continued for research questions that were equally compelling to university-based and community-based partners.

We found that the frequency and the formats of these sharing opportunities were critical. We devised methods of oral reporting, for the writing, dissemination and reflection on position papers. We organized both smaller-scale focus groups and once per year we organized a province-wide conference researchers, professionals, academics, administrators and government officials.

The CHILD Project was also a site for interdisciplinary collaboration across academic and professional boundaries. A major focus of our collaborative work was to integrate theories and methodologies across. For example, ECE, psychology, women's studies, social work, landscape architecture, policy studies, paediatrics, Indigenous studies, neonatology, economics, early intervention, sociology, measurement and evaluation. It was incumbent upon all members of the collaboration to 'listen loudly' to the concepts, assumptions and methodologies of their colleagues. When any one of the ten projects presented an update on its work, the other nine projects were asked to respond to two critical questions: 'What can my own project *learn from* this other research project (and the other disciplines)? And what can my own project *contribute to* this other research project?'

In the course of the five years, additional studies were added to the CHILD Project as a result of the cross-fertilization of the different professions and disciplines. New connections were created between three different studies, which were all concerned with the identification of young children with developmental challenges. The three studies had origins, respectively, in nursing, rehabilitation science and neonatology and in the professional associations of each discipline. The collaborative effort of all three projects resulted in the creation of a community-based model for early identification and intervention, which drew upon the combined strengths and methods of the partners in this cross-disciplinary collaboration.

I close with one final lesson that we learned. Our collaborative work was observed and guided by an international interdisciplinary advisory committee. The committee includes Indigenous elders, psychologists, heads of non-governmental agencies, public policy specialists, sociologists and economists. This group played a key role in ensuring that the Project stayed focus on the aims, goals and objectives of the CHILD Project as a whole. They provided a forum of 'sober second thought' as they listened to our progress reports and our continued challenges.

I hope this letter provides some useful information on our own experiences around collaboration. Perhaps the most important and overarching lesson that we learned is that collaboration is about relationships. All relationships are based upon mutual respect, shared interests and open and meaningful communication patterns.

Kind regards,

Professor Hillel Goelman

University of British Columbia

Exploring Āta

A journey to build a learning community at Lady May

Shil Bae

Built on the understanding that children's development is supported by strong partnerships between children, families and early childhood teachers (Aikman, 1997; Duncan & Te One, 2012; Gonzalez-Mena, 1996), educational policy in New Zealand challenges teachers to work collaboratively. One of the principles of *Te Whāriki*, the early childhood curriculum document 'Family and Community' (Whānau Tangata) states that family and community are an integral part of children's learning, emphasising "two-way communication that strengthens the partnership between the early childhood setting and families" (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 30). Perhaps even more challenging is that within the strands of *Te Whariki* is the expectation that not only children but also their parents have a sense of belonging within the early childhood setting.

The aim of this paper is to report on a study undertaken in 2012 by teachers at Kidsfirst Kindergartens Lady May (hereafter referred to as Lady May) to overcome the challenges in building authentic partnerships with children and families, and to document the impact of these strategies on children and families' learning experiences. To guide the teachers in this study, Āta – the philosophical approach drawing on indigenous knowledge – was explored (Kung & Forsyth, 2007). This paper includes the theoretical framework of this project, the approach of Āta; how it was translated in this context; and the effects of this project on learning experiences in the community of learners at Lady May.

The context

Lady May is a sessional kindergarten that operates as part of the Kidsfirst, Christchurch's association of public kindergartens. Lady May has 30 children and three teachers working in the morning, and 20 children and two teachers in the afternoon. The kindergarten is located in an area of Christchurch where the majority of the community are from various cultures, religions, beliefs, and backgrounds. The diverse nature of the community is well reflected in the children and families at the kindergarten. More than half of the enrolled children and families at the kindergarten speak more than one language. Many cultural artefacts and symbols can be found around the kindergarten, and throughout the day, different languages can be heard whether they are spoken between children or through songs.

Children who are enrolled at the kindergarten are between three to five years old. The degree of connection and familiarity that children and families feel towards the kindergarten varies. Some of these children have been coming to the kindergarten before their enrolment at the kindergarten (either visiting or dropping off their older siblings), while some of the others have arrived in New Zealand just before their enrolment. Therefore, transition to our kindergarten for some children and families means more than getting used to the routines of the kindergarten, but also making sense of a new lifestyle in New Zealand.

Due to the diverse life styles and backgrounds of the families at Lady May, the official 'parent support' that is run by the kindergarten or the Kidsfirst Kindergartens organisation had not been available for over four years. However, some parents took initiatives, and have started a small coffee group for those who can catch up with each other informally during the session time.

There are two full-time teachers and one part-time teacher at Lady May. All of these teachers are trained and registered as early childhood teachers in New Zealand, but their cultural heritages, beliefs, and values are significantly different, making the culture of the teaching team diverse and flexible. Teachers at Lady May have been on constant lookout for ways of incorporating children's and families' aspirations and values in learning stories and activities. However, in spite of attending many professional development courses about parents' participation and implementing various strategies for building a strong partnership with parents and children, teachers at Lady May felt that there was much to be improved for establishing the identity of the kindergarten as a 'learning community' (Wenger, 1998).

Teachers at Lady May described the nature of parents' and children's participation as more of a 'contribution' rather than a 'partnership'. For example, revisiting learning stories was often done at a superficial level with discussion about who was in the photos and what the children in the photos were doing. Similarly, many conversations with parents about children's learning lacked depth; the focus was often on what learning the 'teachers' had noticed and what this experience meant through the lens of teachers' values and beliefs in learning. Even when families offered their perspectives on learning, the conversations revolved around where 'teachers' place values such as 'worthwhile', rather than whether something is important and meaningful for children and families.

To support teachers' reflective practice on their pedagogy, the approach of Āta was introduced and implemented. Teachers read Forsyth and Kung (2007)'s article on Āta and engaged in critical discussions about what it meant to them in their practice within the context of Lady May. The aim of this process for teachers was to investigate their own pedagogy to identify the elements that have limited children and parents' ownerships of learning, and how partnerships could be strengthened. When these became more clearly evident, then we recognised a 'learning community' (Wenger, 1998).

What is Āta? What did Āta mean to the community of Lady May?

Āta is a philosophical approach that is drawn from the knowledge of indigenous people in Aotearoa New Zealand. According to Forsyth and Kung (2007), Āta is a way of being that demands practitioners engage in constant self-reflection and analysis, and examine the social implications of their pedagogy.

There are three key concepts in understanding 'Āta': critical reflection, relationship, and dialogue. Each of these three concepts are explained in relation to what they mean in the context of pedagogy at Lady May.

Critical reflection

The literal translation of Āta from Māori to English is "with care" or "with deliberation" (Forsyth & Kung, 2007, p. 6). Āta as a philosophical approach, however, embodies more implications in terms of relationships within the setting. For example, the term 'Āta-whakaaro' is defined as "to think with deliberation, considering possibilities" (Pōhatu, as cited in Forsyth & Kung, 2007, p. 6). This opens the possibility of different realities, truth, and values to exist within the context, rather than privileging one specific set of 'so-called truth and values'. Forsyth and Kung (2007) claim that the process of self-reflection encourages practitioners to step back from their positions, thus enabling them to recognise and to examine their values and assumptions that are present in their pedagogies.

This resonated with Lady May teachers' experiences with Āta. Teachers in this project found that critically examining their pedagogy made visible many assumptions and values that they placed on their learning activities. Engaging with one's own pedagogy supported teachers to realise that being 'overly protective' and 'coddling' is not necessarily a representation of a particular parent's less desirable approach in child rearing, rather a representation of the values that teachers placed on a child's independence. By recognising that these judgements about parenting originate from personal beliefs and values (as opposed to the 'absolute truth'), teachers in Lady May found out more about values and beliefs held by families and children.

Considering Āta also led teachers to question whether the learning language in the setting reflects the values and beliefs of children and whānau in learning. If the languages that are used to describe and to assess the learning do not reflect the values of the children and families in the context, how meaningful would these learning experiences be for them? Teachers at Lady May considered that this might be the reason for the superficial revisiting of learning stories by children and the discussions with parents.

I want to see if this works.

The next step for teachers was to come up with strategies to ensure the language of learning reflected the language of Lady May as a learning community. Instead of presenting and reinforcing what teachers regard as 'worthwhile' learning, teachers at Lady May made a display 'Language of Lady May': a visual documentation of what learning meant to parents/whānau and children in the context. The main components of 'Language of Lady May' were photos and quotes of children and parents' words that captured what Lady May as a learning community values in learning.

Relationships

Another significant characteristic of Āta is consideration of how pedagogy reflects relationships. Forsyth and Kung (2007) claim that those who deeply consider Āta not only examine the values that are important to individuals and how these values are reflected in their practices, but also what these mean to others in the context.

Drawing strongly from Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) that acknowledges the integrity and legacies of self and others, the proponents of Āta argue that reflecting on practitioners' pedagogy through a relational lens "strengthens and develops the integrity of both the 'self' (practitioners of Āta) and the 'other' (people around the practitioners)" (Forsyth & Kung, 2007, p. 6). In other words, the Āta framework supports individual to understand that their values and beliefs presented in the pedagogy will affect others in the context, and encourages practitioners of the concept to be more receptive and respectful of what others cherish.

In Lady May's case, respecting the values and beliefs of others required teachers to think about the implications of using learning languages that may not be meaningful for the children and families. Upon reflection, Lady May teachers became concerned that by imposing values and languages of learning that did not sufficiently reflect children and whānau's beliefs and values, teachers may unconsciously have normalised their monopolising of the assessment process, thus reinforcing the existing power relations

between teachers and children and families.

For a genuine partnership to be established in Lady May, teachers recognised the need for stepping back from their authoritative positions as 'experts', and to identify what was significant to the wider Lady May learning community. For example, instead of imposing on children and parents the requirement to use abstract learning languages such as 'problem solving' to describe the learning experience, children and parents' own words such as "I want to see if this works" and "Trying things out" were presented with the photos of the experience. These documented languages, then, were applied during the discussions with children and whānau to acknowledge and to articulate the learning happening.

Dialogue

According to Forsyth and Kung (2007), the most distinctive aspect of Āta is neither reflective pedagogy itself nor how it strengthens relationships between individuals in the setting, but rather what emerges *from* these aspects. The authors maintain that an Āta framework provides an avenue for educators to scrutinise not only their own pedagogy, but also the implication of the power dynamics in learning environments. Rather than blaming a busy life style of parents/whānau or cultural differences for the low participation of parents/whānau in the programme, Āta pedagogues understand that the authentic partnership goes beyond 'participation' or 'contribution', and seek to develop "relational connectedness" (Forsyth & Kung, 2007, p. 8) that enables people to engage with each other holistically through dialogues. Through these dialogues, students and teachers have opportunities to replace traditional assumptions about 'knowledge' and 'learning' with what is relevant to them.

Outcomes

In examining children's and whānau's responses, the Lady May teachers concurred with Forsyth and Kung (2007) that implementation of a philosophy of Āta supported them to provide a better environment for children and parents. Understanding and implementing the Āta concept led teachers to question whether they unconsciously have monopolised the languages and the values in learning and imposed these on children and parents/whānau.

At the beginning of the Lady May project, the focus was mainly on how the philosophy of Āta would support teachers to be conscious of their pedagogy and implications of their positions as the dominant power player in the educational context. What teachers had not anticipated, however, was the immediate responses from children and families on their efforts to break from this traditional way of teacher/children and family relations. As the project progressed, 'Language of Lady May' became the project for all, as opposed to a 'teachers-only-venture'.

Teachers

At times it was uncomfortable for teachers to apply the

philosophy of Āta because it meant stripping off what had made teachers feel 'safe' in an educational setting for a long time: their authoritative positions, and their ability to decide what is valuable learning is and how it should be presented. However, once teachers overcame this sense of unsureness and uncertainty, they were rewarded with a picture of learning that is full of colours and textures, enriched by the cultures, values and beliefs that children and families bring in.

Through their previous educational lens, teachers may not have noticed that Child A's competency in taking a leadership role in his play because of his less assertive manner of communication. Yet, with the new way of thinking, Child A's ability to notice and encourage other children's strengths so that a goal of his group was achieved was a clear illustration of his competency in leadership. The significance of this Child A's learning experience became even clearer as teachers recognised the connection between how his cultural values define the competency of 'leadership' and the learning that was identified in the activity.

During the conversation about Child A's learning experience, Child A's parents explained to teachers that the concept of leadership in their cultural background is strongly community-based, placing achievement of a community's shared goal above all else. Rather than discussing what was important for teachers, the conversation between teachers and parents revolved around what they valued as a family. It also made visible to parents/whānau that teachers attempted to shift their position from being experts who decide what is valuable, to being co-learners and co-constructors of values and beliefs as a learning *community*.

Parents/whānau

Teachers in Lady May were surprised by the interest that families and whānau showed in 'Language of Lady May'. It became quite common to see parents standing in front of 'Language of Lady May' and reading the content of the display. Various groups of families and whānau became involved with the life of the kindergarten, which was followed by more meaningful dialogues between children, families, whanau and teachers. Through these dialogues, what used to be considered as the 'only knowledge worth knowing' was examined and replaced with what is important to the Lady May learning community.

It seemed to teachers at Lady May that parents developed a stronger sense of ownership with learning languages. Teachers started to notice that parents took a more active role in the assessment of learning, using the learning languages within their conversation with children and teachers. As one parent said:

> It makes me think about what my child is doing… I started to use those words to him when I see it… (It) reminds me "that's right. When he is doing something, he is doing important things like being persistent, working things out"… Sometimes I go back to read them again to remind myself.

This comment from a parent about 'Language of Lady May' is a good illustration of Forsyth and Kung's (2007) suggestion that through opening up pedagogical spaces for Āta, families and whanau are no longer passive in the assessment process. Instead they become active members of the learning community, consciously engaging with learning and its assessment processes.

Children

In her study of the 'Learning Wisdom' project, Carr (2011) emphasises the power of supporting children to be co-authors of their learning journey. She argues that engaging conversations with children about their learning not only expands their views about learning, but also supports them to "make meaning of the educational purpose in this place, and to construct self-stories about being a learner" (p. 260).

This resonated with Lady May learning community's experience. Children and teachers started to be more conscious of the languages of learning in conversations and a craft of articulating one's learning emerged. It seemed that children were able to make a better connection between what teachers wrote in their learning stories and what was happening in their learning. For example, having dialogues between children and teachers supported the strengthening of a visible link between the abstract and complex concept of 'Problem solving' and "I want to see if this works" (children's own words to describe the learning happening).

When abstract concepts of competencies were translated into their own languages, children's interest in learning stories grew stronger and children's growing sense of ownership in learning was evident in the competent use of learning languages within daily lives at kindergarten. Without any further prompt from adults, children applied learning languages to articulate their own learning, and at times utilised these learning languages to support other children's learning such as "Keep going. I will get it this time." and "Let's try a different one. If it doesn't work, we can just try another one."

Conclusions

This study explored how, by reconsideration of their pedagogy through the philosophy of Āta, teachers at Kidsfirst Kindergartens Lady May led to authentic partnerships with children and families. The teachers recognise that this is an ongoing and incomplete process – this is not the end of the road. The teachers also recognise that the small size of this research project does not provide definitive answers for all e.c. centres seeking a learning community. However this study suggests that the reflective philosophy of Āta can be implemented as an effective tool to dismantle the power dynamics within a setting, thus providing an environment where children and families are co-learners and co-authors of values in learning.

Acknowledgements

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E-portfolios

Connecting parents, whānau and teachers in kindergarten communities

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Raewyn Penman

As the New Zealand national early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996), nears the end of its second decade, it is of interest to reflect on how early childhood teachers have been able to engage parents and whānau in the pedagogical documentation and extension of their child's learning and to investigate if new digital technologies, specifically e-portfolios, provide opportunities for greater connections. This article discusses a review of the use of e-portfolios within selected kindergartens within the Kidsfirst Kindergartens in Canterbury/Westland.

Te Whātariki and sociocultural assessment

Te Whāriki is based on sociocultural theory which recognises the context of the growing child as the key to providing a learning environment and experiences that best support and extend that child's learning. Narrative assessments of learning in the form of Learning Stories are one of the main tools used by teachers in New Zealand to communicate learning to parents and children, invite parents and children to participate in the recognition of learning, co-construct how to progress this learning, and build learning communities. Engaging parents in this pedagogical documentation is recognised as critical to sociocultural assessment practices (Carr, 1999; Stuart, Aitken, Gould, & Meade, 2008). In fact, Cooper, Hedges, and Dixon's (2014) research with infant and toddler centres indicates that families are the "main cultivators of children's learning dispositions" (p. 737). To be authentic, assessment should be a dialogue between teachers, children, and parents, and that parents should be active participants in the documentation, not solely consumers of it (Birbili & Tzioga, 2014).

Engaging parents and whānau in children's assessments has been identified as having many benefits for teachers, children, parents, and whānau. For example, families are able to provide a unique perspective of the child, increasing the depth of understanding of learning for teachers by situating knowledge in the wider context of the child's experiences (Birbili & Tzioga, 2014; Emilson & Pramling Samuelson, 2014). Clarkin-Phillips and Carr (2012), in their study of the impact of an integrated service model of early childhood education, found that making assessment portfolios "available, inviting *and* personalised" (p. 181) contributed to strengthening the affordance network for family

engagement. Through being involved, parents gain a greater understanding of what is valued as learning in the early childhood setting and of ways that they can support and extend their child's learning in the home setting (Morrison, Storey, & Zhang, 2011; Stuart et al., 2008). Positive involvement by families through increased communication using such tools as documentation has been found to improve the social, emotional, and academic outcomes for children (Gonzalez & Jackson, 2012; Morrison et al., 2011).

However, commitment alone does not lead to meaningful participation by parents in e.c. assessment processes. Although teachers recognise the value of collaborating with children, parents and whānau, it can be a challenge to achieve the level and type of participation required to improve formative assessment, even when teachers emphasise regular communication (Cooper et al., 2014). In an evaluation of the professional development programme *Kei tua o te pae*, 85% of teachers articulated ways that they elicited parent participation in assessment (Stuart, et al., 2008). Unfortunately this commitment did not translate into written parent contributions with 73% of assessments not containing any 'parent voice' leading the authors to call for "consideration about how assessment documentation can more effectively represent these practices of engagement" (Stuart et al., 2008, p. 106).

E-portfolios?

So what can we do differently? The use of e-portfolios for assessment in e.c.e. is a recent innovation which offers new ways to engage with parents. E-portfolios are digital versions of the profile books or records of learning that children currently have at early childhood services. The interest in and awareness of e-portfolios at Kidsfirst Kindergartens (Canterbury/ Westland) heightened mid-2013.

The trial

After preliminary research on e-portfolios investigating what platforms were available in New Zealand, what security provisions were in place on these platforms and reviewing the Kidsfirst Kindergartens cyber safety agreement for staff, the decision was made to begin a trial of this technology.

In August 2013 six kindergartens from a cross section of socio-economic areas began a four month trial of two

e-portfolio platforms. Both platforms were accessed via the internet and included both a community page that could be accessed by all participants as well as secure pages about individual children. These personal pages were accessed by a password given to that child's parent.

The technological expertise of the teachers involved in the trial ranged from basic to excellent with most teachers identifying themselves as being average or very good. Each kindergarten teaching team received either a one hour webinar or a 1.5 hour face-to-face training session. On-going support was given to all teaching teams by the 'help' staff at the platform provider, either over the phone or through email contact.

Results of the trial

At the end of the four month trial, the teaching teams met with the Education Service Managers (Senior Teachers) to share their experiences and thoughts on e-portfolios. An online survey of participants was completed a few weeks earlier by 80% of participating teachers (18 out of 21) and 45% of parents (49 of 110).

Feedback from teachers:

Despite minor problems, 100% of teachers surveyed recommended the use of e-portfolios in kindergartens. The most problematic area was getting started. The survey indicated that setting up of the e-portfolios was straightforward for 50% of the teachers. However the other 50% of teachers needed some help; 6% of teachers found set up of the e-portfolios to be moderately difficult. A slight increase of workload was noted by 67% of teachers while 33% found that there was no increase to their workload.

Teachers were asked to indicate the most useful aspects of using the e-portfolios. These are included below, along with

comments:

- The ease of uploading stories and the increased communication with parents.

  The ability to upload learning stories and videos to an easy to read format, that allows parents to read them and comment on them in their own time has being highly useful and beneficial.

  I found it an easy way to share learning with parents. I liked being able to load learning stories but also just a photo that I thought was special and worth sharing…It was quick and easy and as I was printing my story, I also uploaded it.

- The increased feedback from parents.

  The parent feedback, I feel some parents find this way of responding to the stories easier and less stressful (English as a second language families).

  It has been great to strengthen relationships with families and get greater input from them as well as a better insight into their home life. This regular feedback from them has been a huge encouragement to continue documenting their child's learning. I have also found it is a quicker way to document a child's learning. The fact that stories can be added quite quickly allows the learning from kindergarten to extend into the home, and vice versa, in the same day. Which is great for strengthening new knowledge. – I like the fact that we receive notifications when someone has commented on a story.

- Communication and feedback from extended whānau.

  Receiving feedback from extended whānau especially family that is overseas. This often takes the form of a 'conversation' between us, extended family and immediate family as comments are made back and forth.

The involvement from our families goes far beyond just the child's mum and dad (who often used to be the only whānau voice that we received). Now other family members from both NZ and all over the world can view the learning of our children. The photos within the learning stories are large and vibrant and really portray the learning that is occurring. [It] has also enabled us to share videos of the children. These are often more powerful than photographs and the children enjoy revisiting their learning through these.

• The ability to keep parents informed about the events happening at the kindergarten.

The ease which parents can access, read and respond to the stories – its great being able to have conversations with parents either online or in person about their child's learning and development.

• Being able to include videos to illustrate children's learning.

Engagement with parents has increased and happens regularly. Love that you can add videos to your story. These add a whole new dimension to sharing a child's learning.

From the teachers perspective, parents have responded to e-portfolios positively; they check their child's portfolio regularly, give verbal feedback to teachers as well as being much more likely to give written feedback to learning stories, and parents have encouraged extended whānau to read and contribute to the e-portfolio.

Feedback from parents

The majority of parents found the e-portfolios very easy to use and contribute to. Most parents accessed the e-portfolios on their home computers (79%), with the remainder using ipads (30%) or an iphone or smartphone (27%). Ninety-six percent of parents who responded felt that the e-portfolios were a good addition to the kindergarten experience. Ninety-eight percent of parents found the email alerts they received when new learning stories for their child or new information about happenings at the kindergarten were posted either useful or very useful.

The survey results showed that parents used the e-portfolios in a variety of ways – especially to share with the child and with extended family and staying informed about events at the kindergarten. See Table 1.

When asked if they visited the e-portfolio more than the profile book, 75% of those who responded answered 'yes' and made comments such as:

My daughter likes to bring the book home often, but having the stories sent to the portfolio to read ensures we don't miss any stories and get to read them right away!

I work full time, so the e-portfolio is perfect. I feel more involved.

Fifty-eight percent of parents thought that the e-portfolio experience had increased their knowledge of learning stories, their child's learning and how teachers use the learning

Table 1:
How parents used e-Portfolios

I read my child's stories on my own	92%
I read my child's learning stories with her/him	58%
I added comments on my child's learning	61%
I added learning stories about what my child is doing at home or on holiday	12.5%
I shared the learning stories with other members of my family	75%
I shared the learning stories with my friends	15%
I kept up to date with things happening at the kindergarten	71%
I talked to the teachers about the learning stories	46%

stories to progress their child's learning. When asked to comment on this increased knowledge, parents wrote:

I have learnt a little bit more about what goes on when Emily is at Kindy, what she has been doing and how she learns from her experiences. We can recognize different stages she is at and continue teaching and helping her along the same lines as when she is at Kindy.

I have discovered just how well the teachers know my child. The child's speak in the learning stories is valuable. I love reading about how my child is progressing in confidence and his interactions with others.

It's great being able to access the site, the reminder emails are fab, quite often when I'm checking my emails the kids aren't around so this gives me the time to sit down and have a good read. It's quite interesting to see the thought process that goes on behind the activities and what the kids and teachers take from it.

A number of parents (52%) took the opportunity to add general comments on e-portfolios.

I love the instant nature and being able to go back to the stories in my own time (while the book is mainly at Kindy).

I have really enjoyed and appreciated having this tool to keep communication open and keep me involved while I also work and cannot always be involved with kindergarten and my daughter's day and learning.

A parent who had one child at the kindergarten and another child at preschool said of e-portfolios:

I think they are a quick and easy way to contribute and

add my own stories to my child's learning journey. The apps make it easy to do this, and there have been times that I have wished my son's preschool would have e-portfolios as we do things at home and I think about the parents voice links to his learning stories and profile books.

Discussion and conclusion

In this trial, e-portfolios seem to have excited, informed and connected these kindergarten teachers, parents and whānau to children's learning in a way that the hard copy profile books have not been able to. The dialogue between teachers, parents and extended whānau was enhanced through the use of e-portfolios and assisted teachers by providing important information about the child in the home context. This enabled teachers and parents to co-construct learning goals. The increased feedback from parents has built another layer on the bridge between kindergarten and home experiences that connects and informs learning (Stuart et al., 2008).

The e-portfolio processes made assessment portfolios available wherever the parent could access the internet. The email alerts invited parents to read and respond to the assessments. The nature of the alerts being sent to the parent and whānau on their own device personalised this invitation. Making narrative assessments available, inviting and personalised in this way, has strengthened the agency of the parents and whānau who have begun to take on an increasing role and responsibility in providing information that assists with building on their child's learning both at home and at the kindergarten (Clarkin-Phillips & Carr, 2012). An example of this is evident in the following parent's comments a learning story in which a child challenges himself to learn to swing:

> *I love this story, it's awesome to see the progression of Charlie persisting with a difficult task and really challenging himself! We have swings at home and we enjoy the swings at local playgrounds too, so we can work together on Charlie's new goal at home and beyond as well.*

The input from parents and whanau provide context for young children, including how dispositions are cultivated (Cooper et al., 2014). An example comes from a grandmother living at a distance who wrote, after accessing her granddaughter's e-portfolio:

> *Wow – Go Keva! You love the monkey bars and now look what you have learned to do on them. Our Monkey Bar Girl swinging upside down with your feet tucked into the handle – that's really awesome, well done! We're so proud of you. Tracey [teacher], what a neat story you've written here and I think the photos are brilliant with what they have captured! To me they show concentration as Keva is focused on doing what has been explained to her, and the smile as she swings off the landing indicates she is enjoying it. (I also saw this smile recently when Keva was doing what her swimming teacher was asking her to do.) I recognise the expression she has in the arm resting on the handle photo – her 'look' when she appears to have enjoyed stretching herself and is seeming to be proud of what she has achieved. Thank*

you, Lynn (Nan).

Such input can deepen teachers' understanding of the child in multiple contexts.

The findings from this trial have shown benefits in connecting teachers, parents, and whānau all as authentic contributors to the child's learning. Further research could investigate other aspects of sociocultural assessment using the platform of e-portfolios, such as increasing the co-construction of learning by the many members of the kindergarten community. whānau.

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Independence

An ethnographic study of e.c.e. in Japan and New Zealand

Rachael Burke

Expectations for children in early childhood education are inevitably linked to cultural beliefs about appropriate goals for children and how best to support them through the early years of schooling. However, contrasting expectations can quickly lead to confusion (Chan, 2006). This article argues that expectations regarding independence (*jiritsu*) in the Japanese early childhood context are concerned with the ability of children to become self-reliant. In contrast, the New Zealand centre reflects interpretations of independence as freedom from control and an emphasis on utilising individual liberty to make choices.

This article draws on ethnographic research carried out at Kaimai Kindergarten, an early childhood centre in suburban New Zealand, and Oka Kindergarten in rural Hokkaido, Japan[1] (Burke, 2013). The study draws on Joseph Tobin's *Preschool in three cultures* methodology (Tobin et al., 2009; Tobin, Wu, & Davidson, 1989), which utilised film to present comparative views of early childhood education through the eyes of teachers.[2] Fieldwork consisted of one month filming and observing in each centre, concentrating on the experiences of four year-old children in each setting. The edited videos were first screened to teachers of the 'insider' culture, then, after subtitling, to teachers of the 'outsider' culture. This means that the Kaimai teachers first viewed 'their own' video, then the Oka video, and vice versa. Finally, to address issues of typicality, the videos were shown to focus groups of early childhood teachers and academics in both countries. Seven focus group sessions were held in New Zealand (74 participants in total) and nine in Japan (75 participants in total).[3]

All of these discussions were filmed and formed the basis for analysis, using a "classic analysis strategy" (Krueger & Casey, 2009, p. 118). Through these layers of dialogue, the body emerged as a focal point for analysis, and as a lens through which to examine cultural constructions. There were other interesting issues, which also emerged but were cut due to space constraints in the main study. One of these was differing Japanese and New Zealand responses to the way independence was conceptualised in each context.

Expectations for children

Viewing the Japanese video for the first time, teachers in New Zealand initially dismissed the behaviour they were watching as 'robotic' and concurrent with preconceived

Japanese notions of independence include children mastering tasks, such as correctly stowing belongings, which mark them as self-reliant.

conceptions they held about Japanese society. Their comments reflect stereotypes of Japanese children as "miserable automations who do nothing but study all day and half the night" within a hierarchical, pressurized society (Martinez, 1998, p. 2).

However, Walsh (2002) disputes Western stereotypes of Japan as rigid and formal, suggesting instead that Japanese culture has a much wider range of expected behaviours than American culture when moving from informal to formal contexts. Japanese early childhood settings prepare children for these extreme contrasts by teaching them to accept intermittent structure because it is interspersed with the spontaneous. Teachers are also unperturbed by chaotic classrooms because they are rooted in orderliness. In fact, for the Japanese centre with an explicitly stated aim of socialising children to life in the group *(shūdan)* environment, the building of strong, cooperative groups is paramount (Peach, 1994).

In many Western cultures, however, the emphasis seems to be on children gaining independence (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007). While the New Zealand early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*, does not explicitly emphasise an individualistic approach, it does suggest that children initiate and direct their own learning through play and exploration (Ministry of Education, 1996). Independence is not only cited as a key area of development for children in *Te Whāriki*, it has

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1. Fictitious names have been given for the two centres in the study.
2. For more detail about how Tobin et al.'s methodology was used for this study, see Burke (2013).
3. In New Zealand, two focus group sessions were held in Christchurch, and one each in Dunedin, Nelson, Wellington, Napier and New Plymouth. In Japan, sessions were held in Tokyo, Saitama, Osaka, Eniwa and three in Kutchan. Two sessions were conducted in Christchurch with groups from Hiroshima and Nara.

been discussed by New Zealand academics as a goal of early schooling (Higgins, 2000; Wylie & Smith, 1993).

In contrast, Japanese society views appropriate dependence as an essential skill for youngsters to develop (Doi, 1973). Children are encouraged to cooperate with their peers as a means of fulfilling their potential as individuals (LeVine & White, 2003). As they learn to suppress their own desires within the early childhood environment, children are also acquiring interdependency skills which will be valuable for their own personal development and success.

Although notions of (in)dependence are key to both contexts, they are manifested differently in the two countries. As the videos screened, the Japanese teachers questioned the ability of New Zealand children to call themselves independent. In New Zealand, viewers were surprised to see that the Japanese children they had expected to be totally teacher-directed were, in fact, remarkably self-reliant in certain situations.

Notions of independence (*jiritsu*) in the Japanese early childhood context are concerned with the ability of children to become self-reliant. However, this meaning is somewhat inadequate as members of the kindergarten also rely on the benevolence and help of their classmates to achieve the goal of independence. In contrast, children's behaviour at the New Zealand centre reflects freedom from control and an emphasis on utilising individual liberty to make choices. This article takes vignettes from the videos, and teachers' responses to these, to explore contrasting ideas about how independence is manifested in each context.

Manifesting independence

In the first scene of the Japanese video, a brightly painted bus pulls up to the kindergarten. As the bus doors swing open, children tumble out to be greeted by the principal before proceeding into the entrance area (*genkan*) where they swap their outside shoes for an indoor pair, stow their bags, and head down to their classrooms to unpack the rest of their equipment. Throughout this scene, there is one element which was obviously missing from the New Zealand centre's arrival time: the children's parents. While a few children are dropped off by their parents, the majority of the students at Oka Kindergarten arrive without a family member. For those parents who do accompany their children, the *genkan* marks the point at which the child passes into a different world which is not open to them (Tobin, 1992; Walsh, 2002).

For Kaimai teachers, the absence of the parents was not only surprising because of the children's young age, it contradicted one of the important tenants of their national early childhood curriculum which calls for a sense of belonging (Ministry of Education, 1996). Including family in the world of the early childhood setting is seen as vital to a positive experience and centres strive to make links with children's families and the wider community (Carr & May, 2000; Swick, 2004). When New Zealand children arrive with their parents in the morning, it is seen as a valuable opportunity to extend those connections between centre and home.

However, Oka teachers explained that when children enter

an early childhood setting in their country, they are taking the first steps towards gaining the skills to function smoothly in Japanese society as an adult. It is essential that children learn to distinguish between the 'inside' *(uchi)* and 'outside' *(soto)* contexts and adjust their behaviour accordingly. While Japanese mothers promote indulgent *(amae)* behaviour within the family home, they expect children to learn to display restraint towards peers, neighbours and members of the wider community. For most Japanese children, the first time they encounter this expectation is when they enter early childhood education (Peak, 2001). Implicit in this expectation is the belief that children will quickly become adept at mastering their own tasks which in turn serves to ensure life in the group runs smoothly. The morning arrival is one example of how teachers and parents implicitly cooperate to ensure children understand the separation of the two domains of *uchi* and *soto* (Sano, 1983).

For some of the New Zealand teachers, viewing the arrival scene at Oka Kindergarten provoked them to think about their own expectations for children and how these were played out in a practical sense in their own centres. As a Wellington teacher commented, the ability of the Japanese children to organise themselves in the morning was in contrast to the Kaimai Kindergarten video where parents assisted children to stow their belongings, take off their shoes and locate their cubby holes. However, teachers at Kaimai Kindergarten didn't necessarily recognise that the Japanese teachers were instructing the children in the skills required to become a functioning member of the group. One teacher saw children's behaviour not

Independence in the New Zealand context is marked by children directing their own learning experiences

as the result of repetitive socialisation towards self-reliance, but more as a reaction to several environmental factors such as the absence of parents, the boundary enforced between children and mothers at the *genkan*, and large class sizes. For another Kaimai teacher, the Japanese children's reactions signalled a clear response to teacher expectations at the kindergarten, and the sense of conformity binding children's actions together.

Kelly (2001) has pointed out that despite Western stereotypes which characterise the Japanese as robot-like, the Japanese themselves view conformity as a means of developing their skill in *kejime*. The notion of *kejime* can be explained as the ability to distinguish between different contexts and adjust one's behaviour accordingly. In a setting such as the kindergarten, which promotes 'life in the group' (*shūdan seikatsu*), individual children do not see acting like others around them as counter to individuality but instead benefit from the sense of inclusion that comes from abiding by group goals. At the same time, children's rights to engage in decision making are fostered along with positive cultural values such as empathy and kindness.

Fostering self-reliance

Another example of differing notions of independence between Japan and New Zealand could be seen in the way in which children's attendance was recorded in each of the two settings. At Oka Kindergarten in Japan, the camera recorded a young girl painstakingly peeling off stickers to place in her attendance book. All of the children are expected to take responsibility for marking which days they have been present, and for filing the book back in its correct place afterwards. Each morning, the teacher asks the children if everyone has remembered to record their presence, hang up their hand towels, and stow their bags correctly. Any children who may have forgotten one or more of these tasks quickly scurry to complete them while the rest of the group looks on.

At Kaimai Kindergarten in New Zealand, the video also showed attendance being recorded. However, in this case the teacher stands in the entrance slowly ticking off the list of names as she ensures each parent has remembered to sign in their child. The Japanese teachers were surprised to see this job assigned to teachers and parents. It appeared to them that one further job had been created for busy teachers when it was clear that children were perfectly capable of administering this task themselves.

New Zealand teachers see checking the attendance lists as part of safety procedures, which require parents to sign their children in and out of the centre. Likewise, Japanese teachers do also check that the attendance roll matches what children have indicated. However, teachers work to create the impression that children are wholly responsible for this job. For the New Zealanders, achieving independence was measured less in the way that children took the initiative in managing their own self-care or centre routines, but more about the choices that they made that instilled a sense of empowerment and competence. Focus groups from around New Zealand were positive about the level of autonomy evident at Kaimai Kindergarten. They viewed the children's opportunities to

make decisions for themselves as an appropriate sign of independence, and a skill that would assist them in society as adults.

These comments link up with New Zealand beliefs that position the child as a competent learner who is confident in directing their own play and making independent choices without the need to necessarily consult with the wider peer group. Although New Zealand teachers talked about children becoming independent in the early childhood setting, much less was expected of them in terms of responsibility and self-management when compared to Japanese children of the same age. Instead, children's attempts to become autonomous along with their improving decision-making skills were celebrated as positive steps towards achieving independence. For example, at mat time at Kaimai Kindergarten all children were not expected to contribute to clearing and cleaning the space for the discussion. Instead, those who were willing or interested in assisting wiped the tables down or stacked chairs. While the teachers certainly worked to foster a sense of self-reliance and responsibility in children, the desire to contribute to group routines or develop self-management skills was left up to individual personalities. This view was supported by many parents at the centre who routinely hung up bags, put on children's shoes and helped their children with clothing upon arrival or departure.

In contrast to mat time preparations at Kaimai Kindergarten, clean up time at Oka Kindergarten involved all the children helping with the job. Those children who shirked their responsibility were often reprimanded by their peers until they too began participating. Within the early childhood setting, Japanese children have a number of tasks that need to be completed in order for 'life in the group' to proceed smoothly. These include being responsible for one's own belongings, changing into appropriate clothing for different activities, setting out utensils for lunch, ensuring equipment is stacked neatly in one's cubby holes and donning the appropriate shoes for particular spaces in the centre. While kindergartens do not generally offer hot lunches or require children to take a nap, these activities are a regular part of the childcare centre. In such institutions, above and beyond the jobs listed, children are also responsible for serving lunches to one's peers, clearing up the dishes, laying out bedding and folding it up again, as well as cleaning the classroom.

Teachers spend a great deal of time trying to establish in children a self-reliant attitude and a desire to perform tasks by themselves. Children who refuse to undertake these tasks and try to seek assistance from the teacher are labelled *wagamama* (selfish or expecting their own way). Such children are seen as having fundamentally fail to grasp the difference between home life and the *shūdan seikatsu* context (Peak, 2001).

Conclusion

This article has discussed the ways in which early childhood teachers' and parents' expectations of children reflect the dominant culture of their society. While the mechanisms for achieving notions of independence may differ, it is clear that teachers in both Japan and New Zealand see this as an

attainable goal for children. However, the meanings that each society brings to this aim are culturally prescribed. In Japan, the focus remains on children becoming self-reliant enough to manage the kindergarten routines and tasks but doing so within a structured format, which respects the group ethic of the *shūdan seikatsu* context. In New Zealand independence is defined more by the individual child who develops aspects of their own character within an environment supported by the teachers and parents. As the Japanese teachers pointed out, this approach is more demanding on teachers' time and links to the issue of low child/teacher ratio as a sign of quality early childhood education in New Zealand (Burke, 2013).

New Zealand expectations are based on the notion that children have rights which must be acknowledged and respected in the early childhood setting. Japanese expectations are more aligned with the desire for children learning to become a fully functioning member of the group. Individual rights are less important than developing the skills to become interdependent in the early childhood setting. Children learn to suppress their own desires for the group (Peak, 2001). In each case, the expectations that are expressed, both explicitly and implicitly, in the early childhood centre reflect the ideals of the wider community. A failure to internalise these concepts means that children will struggle to successfully exist as an adult member of society.

In the globalised world where cultural identity is not discrete within national boundaries, the relevance of this study lies in its ability to reveal implicit cultural practices, embrace and understand them. In the increasingly diverse early childhood setting, questioning the naturalness of everyday, embedded interactions both fosters teachers' cultural understanding and opens the way for constructive reflections.

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Challenging early childhood socio-cultural contexts

The inclusion of children with Down Syndrome

Christine Rietveld

Recent studies show that some children's experiences of inclusion may not support their social and academic learning (Rietveld, 2012; Macartney & Morton, 2013). Children's impairments and how they are responded to form part of the children's sociocultural context and so affect their quality of inclusion in educational settings. It is therefore helpful for teachers to focus more on inclusion into mutually satisfying relationships between children, as opposed to routines and activities. This article will discuss how differing teachers' beliefs about disability/inclusion result in different practices, which in turn affect the quality of relationships that the children experience.

Historically, children with impairments have been excluded from educational settings or, at the very most, included as devalued members on the basis that their impairments defined their total being. For example, a diagnosis of Down Syndrome (DS) defined the person as having a static all-encompassing personal deficit or 'handicap' without a consideration of other aspects of her/his being, such as interests, strengths, or the quality of the social contexts she/he participates in. Children with impairments have been seen as "dependent, childlike, helpless, passive, needy, and requiring compensation" (Neilson, 2000, p. 21). The historical educational response to this view of children has involved separate special education or assimilation into regular settings as low status minority students.

In contrast to this historical deficit view of disability is the social model of disability. This contrasting view does not ignore the role of impairments, but argues that disability occurs in addition to impairment through social, pedagogical, political, economic, and other barriers, that hinder equal participation. In the words of the New Zealand Disability Strategy: "Disability is the process which happens when one group of people create barriers by designing a world for only their way of living, taking no account of the impairments other people have" (Minister for Disability Issues, 2001, p. 3). According to Oliver (2013), the social model of disability acknowledges that how we interpret and respond to impairments is socially constructed. In educational settings, this model has significant implications for learning. Shifting the focus from the 'deficit individual' to how regular settings, such as early childhood centres and schools respond to the diversity of all learners links in well with *Te whāriki*, the NZ early childhood curriculum (Ministry of Education, 1996), with its emphasis on the quality of learning within a sociocultural context.

Facilitative inclusion

Facilitative inclusion involves changing the dominant culture by promoting pedagogical processes that enhance learning for ALL children. An earlier study (Rietveld, 2002) provides some useful examples of what inclusion could look like in a primary school setting. The study revealed that one of the case study children, 5-year old Ian (DS) had a new entrant teacher who consistently modified classroom practices to facilitate all children's inclusion.

How well children included one another became an integral part of school activities, requiring children to be mindful of this aspect. For example, during a developmental session, children were required to report back not only on their group's product, such as their block structure, but also on how they included one another throughout the process, and what they did when difficulties arose. At other times, the introduction and initial structuring of ball activities and games during interval and lunchtimes provided additional opportunities for all new entrants to experience inclusion. To facilitate such inclusion requires not only helping children discover commonalities with the child, but also encouraging talk about any concerns they may have about the child and her/his differences and interpreting unconventional behaviour. For example, at Ian's first pre-entry visit, an incident occurred when children were supposed to be sitting on the mat and Ian left to move some chairs to his mother and sibling. The teacher noticed the children sniggering and when a child called out, "Look what Ian's doing", the teacher responded calmly and positively by

saying, "Yes, Ian's Mum can now sit on a chair."

Interrupting demeaning forms of discussion or comments and focussing on what is expected in the situation made an impact on children experiencing more authentic inclusion. When children were physically picking up Ian, his teacher interrupted them, saying:

> "Ian has got one Mummy and he doesn't need lots of Mummies to look after him. He needs lots of friends. He's not your little brother…. He's just the same age as you are and he needs you to be his friend."

Ian's teacher valued the expertise Ian's parents brought to the situation by interpreting the information in a way that would benefit not only Ian, but potentially his classmates and wider school community. She explained that she had changed her practices in response to Ian's parents informing the school that Ian's competencies did not encompass climbing static outdoor equipment, and they were concerned about Ian's potential exclusion at lunch-time. They expressed that Ian's strengths lay more in football activities. As a consequence, the principal provided balls for Ian's and the other junior class. Further, in consultation with the children, Ian's teacher and teacher-aide facilitated football games that supported the potential inclusion of all new entrants. As the children internalised the structuring, they were able to include one another in these ball games with minimal adult support.

A further example of incorporating parental input was the teacher's greater use of visual prompts (e.g. to illustrate key concepts in stories) to support all children's learning, even though their use was prompted by Ian's DS and his stronger visual than auditory memory. The overall outcome for Ian was his experience of genuine inclusion. A term after his school entry, he was an integral member of a group of boys that included play-dates and he made visible progress academically.

Case study examples of peer relationships

To illustrate this theoretical shift in perspectives of children for inclusive education, the following examples come from the three case study children with DS who participated in a larger qualitative study that recorded their transitions to early childhood settings (Rietveld, 2007). In the study, Adam (attending a playgroup for children aged 0-12 years) and Emma and David (attending local early childhood centres) were each observed for their first few days of entry. Adam and David were then observed three years later, in the month prior to their sixth birthday. Emma was unavailable for the second set of observations. All children's names are pseudonyms. The teachers in each setting participated in semi-structured interviews. The data were analysed for themes and patterns identifying inclusion, ascertaining the focal children's experiences of inclusion, and identifying the sources of these different experiences.

A key finding from this study (Reitveld, 2002; 2007) was that not all children's experiences of 'inclusion' were equal. While all teachers spoke warmly and enthusiastically about the child with DS and expressed a keenness to do whatever would maximise her/his development, such interest, affection, and enthusiasm were insufficient on their own to enable the children to experience optimal inclusion. Inclusion tended to be interpreted as meaning that the child's assimilation into the existing cultures. For example, one teacher said: "She just fits in … she's really good…. I don't see her as a drain at all".

To support this view, the teachers also minimised the child with DS's differences. As one teacher said, "They (children) don't notice anything different. They don't mind. They just take him as a person". Another teacher said: "She's just one of the group, which is really good. I haven't seen any evidence of them noticing any differences."

Pedagogical practices based on ignoring differences resulted in the child with DS's assimilation into the existing culture, as the centre's sociocultural framework at all levels remained untouched. For example, the children with DS used virtually identical strategies when there was no need to use expressive language. They would say "Hello" or smile at a child at an existing activity; they would watch an activity and express interest through gestures and animated expressions such as Adam said, "Wee!" to the children at the marble run and he asked for a turn "Turn?" using appropriate intonation, facial expression and gesture(s). Emma showed interest in her peers' activity by giving and showing a toy train to the boys playing with the train-set.

However, despite their use of appropriate entry strategies, the children with DS failed to get themselves included into such shared activities. It would seem that peers found something disconcerting about the child with DS, which mitigated against an environment where children become authentically included. Because there were no shared meanings in their encounters with other children, inclusion was a low quality experience for all the children. Peers remained focussed on the child's salient differences, or their impairments, contrary to the adult perceptions.

Being ignored

The effect of ignoring differences resulted in their treating of the child in a lower status role, as the following examples suggest:

> Emma sits at the morning tea table with eight others. She has a banana in front of her. A boy who has a banana sits on her right and a girl holding a banana sits on her left. A teacher sits next to the girl. The boy reaches over Emma's head to show the teacher his banana. Similarly other children are having conversations with each other about the contents of their morning tea including their (same) bananas. The boy and girl on either side of Emma play peek-a-boo briefly with one another over Emma's head and

share with each other that their bananas are the same. During the 25-minutes that Emma is at the table, at no stage is she involved in any interaction with peers.

Another type of ignoring involved the child with DS actively initiating entry by using appropriate verbal and non-verbal communication but the other child took no notice. For instance:

Adam picks up the ping-pong ball from the floor and hands it back to the participants playing table-tennis. He watches the game with considerable interest and says excitedly, "Wee! Ooh, ball" as the children bat the ball to one another. He continues to express animated comments, "Ooh, ball, wee!", as well as using animated hand gestures signifying the ball's actions. None of the participants playing the game respond to Adam. Adam picks up a spare table tennis bat and ping-pong ball and rolls the ball across the table with his bat. The three children playing table-tennis including 7-year old Hamish pick up Adam's ball and incorporate it into their game. Adam asks Hamish, "Me?" and vocalises further as he shows his bat and points to the ball the children are using. [Presumably asking, "Where's 'my' ball?"] Hamish looks briefly at Adam, but continues playing. Adam watches the game from the side, then walks off with his bat to his sibling at another activity.

At times, the children with DS experienced brief episodes of joint attention, such as stroking one another on the arm and smiling at one another. However, unlike the typically developing children, the children with DS were never invited by peers to play or become part of a social group (e.g. those who played in the sandpit), so essentially they were physically but not authentically included. At times, children seemed puzzled by the unconventional behaviour of the children with DS as evidenced by their staring, calling in the teacher or parent instead of dealing with situations themselves, or dealing with the child as an object or inferior member. Teachers and parents were seldom observed interpreting any unconventional behaviour to children to facilitate any same-status reciprocal interaction. It seemed that ignoring peers' concerns or understandings was consistent with the dominant view of inclusion as assimilation.

Assigning child the role of baby or object (unequal status relationships)

Incidents occurred where the child with DS was treated as a much younger group member (e.g. a baby) or treated as if she/he were not fully human, such as when peers performed actions on her/him without establishing any shared understandings. This is illustrated in the following example:

At the drawing table, Elisabeth takes the large crayon out of Emma's hands, saying, "That's too big for you", despite Emma replying "No", expressing non-verbal disapproval and managing the large crayon.

Children also reported that they viewed the child as a younger member rather than a same-age peer.

A group of children are at the morning tea table, and a girl comments that 5-year old David has the "baby cup" (sipper cup with lid commonly associated with younger children) to which another child responds, "Yes, 'cos he's a baby, eh?" The girl nods in agreement.

It was difficult for the case study children to gain entry to one or more of the peer groups, when other children viewed themselves as superior to the child with DS. Including others with dignity and respect requires real knowledge of self and others, rather than misguided beliefs of superiority/inferiority based on stereotypical information (Macartney, 2012).

Disability occurs in addition to impairment through social, pedagogical, political, economic, and other barriers, that hinder equal participation

The research showed that the children with DS experienced active and passive exclusion and/or inclusion as lower-status members, as an integral part of their 'participation.' For example, peers inspected/explored the child's face or tapped her/his cheeks. They also took items out of the child's hands without consultation. This continued over time for David and Adam as these patterns of interaction on entry were still observed three years later. These two boys participated in brief exchanges with peers, but they were not sought out for play by others. Instead, they self-selected their own activities and experienced various forms of exclusion and low quality forms of inclusion (Rietveld, 2010).

The pedagogical practices articulated and implemented in the early childhood settings would appear to be based on the premise that inclusion equals assimilation *into* existing cultures, a finding also supported by Hamilton's (2005) research in early childhood settings. Like other institutions such as schools and workplaces, these early childhood cultures were historically instigated for children without impairments, who are more likely to be intrinsically motivated to seek out their own social and cognitively challenging play experiences. The presence of children with DS inevitably changes the existing sociocultural context, given differences in biological functioning, which impact on the physical, psychological, and socioemotional processes at play. Such differences require a significant change in pedagogy if children with and without DS (and other differences) are to experience quality inclusion. The characteristics of DS affect not only the children with DS's learning, but also their responses to and the reactions of other participants in their settings.

What does all this mean?

Enrolling children with impairments such as DS cannot

mean "business as usual" for early childhood teachers. It necessitates a more mindful approach that takes into account the challenges posed by the children's differences in being and functioning. It is through the inclusion as same-status membership that children gain access to more advanced social and cognitive learnings and to authentic relationships.

To support the process of developing a more responsive social context, teaching requires a shift from including children into activities to a focus on facilitating same-status mutually satisfying peer relationships and using activities to support such relationships, as the earlier example from the new entrant setting illustrated (Rietveld, 2002). If children are not helped to participate in valued social roles, their access to other culturally valued learning is restricted (Rex, 2000; Rietveld, 2002).

Teachers should interpret and discuss the likely intent of a child's unconventional behaviour in a valuing manner, instead of ignoring any staring or sniggering by peers, or silencing the questions or observations by the other children. In Ian's new entrant class (Rietveld, 2002), the teacher engaged in sensitive discussion and explanations to support the children who were interpreting Ian's intentions themselves, ignoring irrelevant behaviours, and focusing on mutually satisfying interactions. His peers also accepted some of Ian's unconventional behaviours as new norms for the class. For instance, classmates were observed adopting Ian's way of playing hopscotch (which was jumping instead of hopping), as an equally valid way of playing.

The inclusion of children with DS involves peers getting to know multiple aspects of the child's personality (Lindsay, McPherson, Aslam, McKeever & Wright, 2013; Rietveld, 2002) and seeing beyond initial impressions. If teachers and parents are to help children develop more mature constructions of the child, then they need to be able to deal with the issue of difference in a way that positions the child as an insider (same-status member) of the group.

Final thoughts

Increasing the knowledge base of teachers concerning the teaching and learning processes for young children and how the role of impairments such as DS affect those processes could enhance learning opportunities for children with and without DS in 'inclusive' settings. Teachers need to support more enabling forms of inclusion. They also need to be aware that peers do notice differences in children with DS and consider how they might support children's queries or non-verbal reactions in a way that is respectful and facilitative of all children's inclusion.

Finally, the implementation of suggested pedagogical strategies with their focus on changing the sociocultural context is likely to provide a richer context in which authentic inclusion can occur for all children.

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Neoliberalism and the 'professional teacher'

The legacy of the '10 year strategic plan' for e.c.e.

Rikke Betts

Pathways to the Future: Nga Huarahi Arataki. A 10-year strategic plan for early childhood education **(Ministry of Education, 2002) was applauded as a significant policy document (Moss, 2008). Not only did it reflect the years of advocacy that had preceded it, but it also encapsulated many of the dreams and ambitions of the early childhood sector: qualified teachers in all teacher-led centres, improved teacher and child ratios, and increased affordable access for children and whānau (May, 2010). However, Nuttall (2004 cautioned that the Strategic Plan was:**

> … both a response to the early childhood field and an indication of Government priorities in the medium to long-term. The Plan is a policy text and, as such, primarily a tool of government, no matter how synchronous its contents might be with the wishes of the field (p. 5).

As a policy document, the Strategic Plan reflects the economic philosophy of *neoliberalism* which constructs the State as assuming minimal responsibility for its citizens. Under this rationale, the state is only obliged to offer basic financial support system for those in needs; for example, essential public services, such as health and education for its citizens (Fitzsimons, 2000; Fitzsimons, Peters & Roberts, 1999). The effect of this policy is to privilege competition, the free market place and the use of quality assurance systems of organisational management and accountability, such as became mandatory in e.c.e. with the introduction of the revised Statement of Desirable Objectives and Practices (Ministry of Education, 1998).

Using the Strategic Plan as a focal point, this article considers constructions of early childhood education (e.c.e.) teacher professionalism and traces the influence of neoliberal approaches in New Zealand education policy.

Neoliberalism, e.c. professionalisation and the Strategic Plan

The policy document *Pathways to the future: Ngā huarahu arataki* (Ministry of Education, 2002) arose from the dominant neoliberal economic policy. While there was strong emphasis on social cohesion (Codd, 2002), there was also an emphasis placed on central administration of government funding and access to "meet national objectives" instead of "growth for growth's sake" (McLaughlin, 2003, p. 25).

While the Strategic Plan is no longer the current policy document for early childhood (it reflects policy of the 5th Labour government which left office in 2008 when the National Coalition government was elected), no replacement strategy has been prepared. No other document has replaced it in its scope or in its lasting definition of the sector and its aspirations for early childhood in New Zealand.

The overall aim of *Pathways to the Future* was a target direction for e.c.e. to form the "cornerstone of our education system" (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 1), and to ensure the overall economic, educational and health of the nation. It set out clear targets for the e.c.e. sector and groups of society that had little engagement and involvement in 'quality e.c.e.', i.e. Māori and Pasifika children. The strategies in this document clearly reflected the then Labour government's intention to ensure children experience quality e.c.e. settings by imposing regulative requirements to improve the sector to meet the goals of the government direction.

The Strategic Plan had three overarching aims to:

1. increase participation in quality e.c.e. services;

2. improve the quality of e.c.e. services; and

3. promote collaborative relationships between services and communities pertaining to children (Ministry of Education, 2002).

Under the heading of 'improving the quality of e.c.e. services' came the emphasis on the problematic expectation that the sector's teachers should be fully qualified by 2012. This brings into focus the equally problematic issue of the status of early childhood teachers and what would define them as professionals.

The status of early childhood teachers is reflected in the labels given. Historic New Zealand government policy documents and regulations reflect this. Those working with young children have been referred to as:

- 'adults' - *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996, p.99);

- ' educator' - *Quality in Action – Te Mahi Whai Hua* (Ministry of Education, 1998, p. 4)

- 'staff' - *Before Five* (Department of Education, 1988, p. 6) (p. 6).

Current government regulations continue this ambivalent

attitude. The current 'Licensing criteria' uses the term 'adults providing education and care' (see, for example, (Ministry of Education, 2008, p. 5).

One reason for the diversity of labels is the fact that in this country, the early childhood sector comprises a diversity of services, including those led by parents who may or not be fully qualified as teachers. Another reason is the prevalence of unqualified or underqualified teachers working in education and care centres (Ministry of Education, 2013).

What defines an early childhood teacher as professional is also contested (Aitken & Kennedy, 2007; Urban, 2008; Duhn, 2011). A traditional view of a teacher positions the profession within a set of attributes and/or standards-based skills (May, 1996). These views of teaching and teachers place the idea of the professional as being one who is qualified and who is recognised by a registering processes within their profession (Grey, 2012). This is how professional e.c.e. teachers are seen in the Strategic Plan; targets were set for teachers to be fully qualified by 2012. The expanded registration process for teachers in e.c.e. endeavoured to legitimise the status of e.c.e. teachers and to ensure that teachers provide a quality programme that would "enhance strong early learning foundation through participation in quality e.c.e. services" (Ministry of Education, 2002, p. 9).

In contrast to the construction of teachers' professionalism within a standards model, authors such as Dalli (2012) and Grey (2012) argue for an alternative view of professionalism for teaching. They highlight the complex relational and emotional connections with children, whānau, and teaching colleagues. This is a challenging perspective because of the deeply imbedded assumptions of neoliberalism which continue to inform national educational policy. Of particular concern is the neoliberal emphasis on privileging the marketplace – an extension of a logic that foregrounds individual achievement.

Positioning children and their parents as consumers of a service is problematic if children are viewed as being the sole responsibility of their parents who, on behalf of their children, could then purchase educational services in a market that offered competitive prices and variations in quality for parents (Mitchell, 2005). This has been recognised as problematic for decades. In 1992, Helen May wrote that early childhood facilities, constrained by lack of funding and regulations, "have not had a good record in upholding and imposing quality standards" (p. 89).

The legacy of the Strategic Plan

The change in Government in 2008 saw the beginning of a raft of changes to the education sector and in particular to e.c.e. The the most devastating change was the scrapping of 100% qualified teachers funding bracket which undermined and devalued early childhood teaching as a profession. Another longer term effect of neoliberalism on the e.c.e. sector has been a dramatic increase in privately owned centres. For example, in 2008, 36% of all enrolments in early childhood education were in privately owned services. By 2009 more than 60% of enrolments in education and care centres (childcare) were in private services. (May & Mitchell, 2009). Large corporations have invested in e.c.e. services and changed the landscape of

e.c.e. services from largely community services to a profit-based business model (Duhn, 2010). The profit-based business model positions the child and their families as a customer who is buying and paying for a service.

There have also been changes noticeable in the implementation of the national curriculum – *Te Whāriki*. In 2013, the Educational Review Office (ERO) found that *Te Whāriki* is underutilised and poorly implemented with teachers having limited knowledge of the curriculum document despite its eighteen years of implementation. Alongside these findings are the realities of the budget cuts to professional development, scrapping of the e.c.e. exemplar centres (Centres of Innovation), as well as the moving away from the policy framework provided by *Pathways to the Futures* and its three overarching aims (see Meade, 2011)

Looking forward: What does the future hold for e.c.e. teachers as professionals?

There is an urgent need to reconceptualise what we mean by 'professional' early childhood teachers. Duhn (2010) advocates for the e.c.e. sector to work within a neoliberal discourse by applying critical engagement, with an awareness of the relationships between pedagogy, daily practice, and the politics of power relations. She proposes this as a way forward to construct new concepts of professionalism and leadership, thereby providing a vigorous foundation for discussions and action. Similarly, Brown (2009) calls for Initial Teacher Education (ITE) providers to become well-informed about the impact of neoliberalism on teaching to enable their students' engagement with these policies. Dalli (2010) also focuses on teacher education when she argues that a self-critical framework should be incorporated into early childhood ITE: a framework where the teachers are individually reflecting on their own assumptions and attitudes while the e.c.e. sector concurrently engages in discussion of the impact of "future policies and practices that may be unlike what has been envisaged to date" (p. 70). Dalli also advocates for the profession to think critically about themselves as a community in order to face challenges and work strategically and collaboratively within the local context.

There is concern in the e.c.e. sector, however, that the teachers who are currently working in e.c.e. have been brought up in a neoliberal market where they have "internalised neoliberal lessons" (Hayward, 2012, p. 21) and are a product of an ever increasing consumer oriented market (Brown, 2009).

A way forward can be found in Duhn's (2010) analysis of professionalism of ECE teachers through three perspectives. She describes *professionalism and corporation* as the teacher who is not engaged in administrative duties, policy or curriculum development. Whereas *professionalism as a business tool* positions the professional teachers' qualification as a generative income resource, when these are linked to the level of funding received by the government. The third, *Professionalism as a technology of change,* calls for professional teachers to engage in critical thinking about practice. It is this last description of professionalism that would challenge a professional teacher to

question the neoliberal discourse and be able to drive change from within.

Conclusion

Pathways to the future as a policy document positioned the professional teacher as one of the key indicators of a quality e.c.e. service by introducing minimum qualification levels and accreditation requirements. It also raised the profile of e.c.e. within the education sector and in the public domain.

However, *Pathways to the Future* was heavily seated in a neoliberal approach to quantify quality with a targeted approach. The effect of a professional teacher in a neoliberal framework (Duhn, 2010) highlights the contested nature of a professional teacher in e.c.e. The implications for the e.c.e. sector are that professionalism and professionalisation have been produced by government's e.c.e. policy, the Plan being one clear example. Thereby, the professional teacher in e.c.e. is operating in a political minefield where the professionalism and professionalisation of the sector is contuining to be shaped by neoliberal practices.

At odds with the e.c.e. community, these practices favour neoliberal philosophies while silencing other views of the teacher as a professional. Inadequate funding for centres and reduction in professional development budgets diminish the capacity of e.c. centre leaders to upskill and enable their teaching staff to deepen understanding and to step into more professional roles. The legacy of the Strategic Plan is evident in the sustained pressure to do more with less: that is, the foregrounding of neoliberal constructs such as the primacy of the competitive market place above a professionally capable relationally-focused teaching workforce.

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Re-visioning the relationships

Refracted understandings of partnering with parents in the early education space

Judith Duncan and Sarah Te One with Whanganui Central Baptist Kindergarten and Early Learning Centres teachers, family support staff, and their families/whānau

Understanding the dynamics of how adults (teachers, parents and community members) participate in early childhood education services was the focus of a teacher-academic research partnership. In this paper, we outline how our research team reconceptualised our research approaches and methods over the two years that the project ran. We trialled Rogoff et al.'s (2007) prism model as both a theory and a method. We found that this approach revealed a richer, more meaningful and more complex understanding of parent partnership in early childhood education than we had prior to undertaking the research. Using examples from the data to demonstrate the key features of the project, we argue that the prism model is of use for teachers, managers, researchers, and scholars in early childhood education.

The Project

Over a two-year Teaching and Learning Research Initiative Research Project[1] from 2010, we investigated the impact of increasing adults' participation in our early childhood education (ECE) settings for children's learning, family wellness, and strengthening community. We asked: *How does active adult participation in early childhood education enhance positive outcomes for children and their whānau?* The setting was the CBK: the Whanganui Central Baptist Kindergartens and its four early childhood centres and a parent resource centre (known as '303').

The focus of the project was to investigate how 'ordinary' early childhood education (ECE) centres enact 'extraordinary' pedagogy when they include families and wider whānau in 'everyday' ECE programmes. The research team consisted of Judith and Sarah, and CBK's teaching teams from four early childhood centres, and parent facilitators at 303, as well as the management. We had experience working on projects in which the traditional parent/teacher dyad was disrupted in order to enhance the relationship between ECE settings, parents, and communities. Judith and Sarah had led major research projects into parent-centre partnerships in ECE (see Citizens Preschool and Nursery Centre of Innovation, 2008; Duncan, Bowden, & Smith, 2006; Powell, Cullen, Adams, Duncan, & Marshall, 2005; Te One et al., 2007). The researchers within the community of CBK had been part of a joint Ministries of Education/ Development Social Development 'Centre Based Parent Support and Development Pilot Project' (PSD) (see Ministry of Education, 2006).

We wanted to challenge the traditional parent/teacher dyad and its inherent power imbalances which often positions parents as a kind of domestic help, or even as the 'problem' for teachers. We were interested in encouraging active adult participation by shifting the balance of power

Seeing and being seen: Beginning the relationship at CBK
Photograher: Leigh Mitchell Anyon

from the centre and teachers to a shared teacher/parent/whānau/community partnership with a common focus on positive outcomes for children's and family/whānau wellbeing.

In our project we used multiple data sources, which included audio and video observations, mapping adult movements; parent, child and teacher photo journaling; child case studies; individual and focus group interviews with social service workers, community based service providers, children, families, whānau and teaching staff; CBK document analysis (learning stories, planning records); teacher conferencing; and parent surveys. As a collaborative project all members of the research and teaching teams designed and chose the methods and engaged in the analyses of all aspects of the project.

Rethinking traditional relationships between parents and teachers in ECE necessitated trialing new approaches to research methodologies (both the theory and the methods). By adapting traditional methodologies and borrowing from other disciplines, notably architecture (Duncan, Te One, & Thomas, 2012; Sailer & Penn, 2007), the team began to question our usual ways of working. This article describes how, over time, we reframed research approaches, methods, and analyses to introduce new ways of thinking about partnerships with parents. We hope that teachers and managers may find our explorations of Rogoff's prism useful as a means to increase parent participation in their services and also of use to investigate other aspects of their pedagogy and practices.

ECE services working in partnership with parents and communities

Over the last few decades ECE in Aotearoa New Zealand has been premised on the notions of teachers partnering with parents to enhance children's wellbeing and learning, drawing on the principles and goals of *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) and the *Education (early childhood services) Regulations* (Ministry of Education, 2008). The traditional rhetoric surrounding partnerships is one of a shared understanding which assumes both the teacher and the parent have equal status and are equal contributors to the child's experience in ECE settings.

However, the reality for many ECE services may be a little different. Parental participation in a child or children's ECE experience can be mostly teacher-directed and bounded by the structural characteristics of the centre. Parents tend to be viewed as [child's name] mother, father or caregiver; committee member; fundraiser; helper with tidying up, mowing lawns, and baking cakes.

Various technologies (Duhn, 2006; Duncan & Te One, 2012) aim to include parents as important contributors to their child's early learning; for example, Learning Stories (Carr & Lee, 2012) have a section titled 'Parent Voice'. The intention for this 'parent voice' is to invite a parent response to teacher (and sometimes child) narratives about learning in the centre by adding a home-based/family story to develop a holistic view of the child across settings. This however is only one aspect of family/whānau partnership or collaboration. Through our research we argued that ECE should and could be doing more.

Our approach to the research was influenced by Brennan (2007), who argues that the focus on research in early childhood education has been 'between the four walls' of centres. Concentrating research and its accompanying theoretical developments within the service model ignores the wider social and contextual factors that sociocultural theory and research should be considering. We asked: *How can we include the community, the parents and whānau in the teaching and learning within CBK, and within the child's other settings—home and community?*

Figure One: Learning by observing and pitching in. (Rogoff et al. 2014)

Rogoff's 'prism' model

The way we use theories to understand children's learning and development changes over time. Many teachers and researchers are familiar with Rogoff's (1998) planes of analysis model, which enables considering learning through three 'lenses': personal, interpersonal and institutional.

This was a starting place for teachers and researchers to rethink child-centric ways of considering learning; that is, the shift from seeing the child as the lone scientist developing all by themselves under the watchful eye of a teacher.

Since the 1990s, Rogoff's research team have taken a 'work-in-progress' approach to articulating their theoretical ideas about how children learn and develop. Their work has concentrated on a 'community of learners' approach (Wenger, 1998) where shared understanding of community traditions, purposes and goals leads to a transformation of participation in cultural processes. This theory attempts to provide a means to understand how relationships between, within and among participants affect that community. The most recent iteration of Rogoff's 'planes of analysis' theory uses a prism as a metaphor; thus increasing the lenses for analysis from three planes to seven facets. (See Figure One.)

The shift from planes to the prism model enables a viewer to see how pedagogy is informed by different facets of an organisation or community. Discussion of the prism model with the CBK team enabled teachers to reconceptualise their role in relation to parents and to build stronger links and networks with families and the wider community.

Reflecting and refracting learning traditions through a prism

Rogoff et al. (2007, p. 40) argue that to understand the "the dynamic nature of *repertoires* of cultural practice" requires an explicit focus on the organisational practices. This focus reveals tacit, or invisible expectations and rationales for everyday activities and routines teachers, parents, and children engage in as part of their ECE experience. Considered through the prism, these everyday events reveal the integrated facets of community participation. The prism model centres on 'learning traditions' and incorporates seven discrete yet connected components. Learning traditions are widely practised and long-standing (Rogoff et al., 2007) where people learn as legitimate peripheral participants (Lave & Wenger, 1991). With our research question as the focus, we used the prism to examine the 'learning traditions' of CBK, and as a result, transformed the learning traditions over time as we intentionally reconstructed, reconceptualised, and re-enacted the notion of 'active adult participation'.

In CBK these learning traditions translated to studying the routines that teachers, parents, and children engaged in as part of their ECE experience. Taking up Rogoff's challenge and her model, we developed seven facets to our own prism, capturing the context of CBK, the reconceptualising aims for the project, and the rethinking across the project. In this way, the prism was both a theory and a method of this project and enabled us to see all facets of the service. By focusing on the CBK learning traditions we began to see how aspects such as pedagogy, management, administration and relationships constructed what was and was not possible for parent participation. Centering our research questions as the focus of the gaze through the prism, we developed our own seven facetted prism. (See Figure 2.)

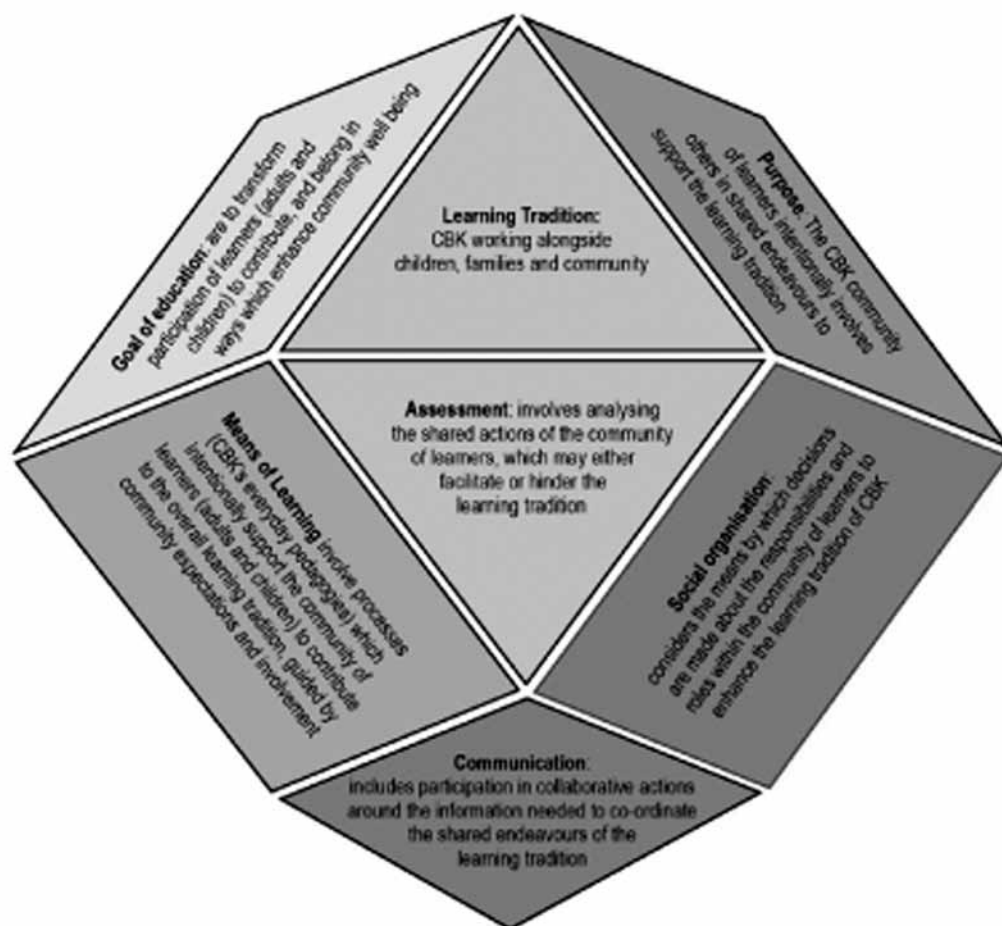Using the prism as a method and a theory enabled us to

Figure Two: The CBK Prism to support community participation based on Rogoff et al.'s (2012) model.

consider the teaching, and nonteaching aspects of CBK, all of which contribute to children's learning, the wellbeing of the families/whānau, and build communities.

Importantly, each facet of the prism can be viewed individually, or through each other, thus creating a prism of perspectives, analysis, and learnings. No one facet is more important than another, yet they all come together to describe the complexity of adult participation, children's learning outcomes, and community wellness in our research project. The seven facets that construct our CBK prism are described below with examples from CBK colleagues. The seven facets are:

• Learning Tradition;

• Goals of Education;

• Purpose of Learning;

• Means of Learning;

• Communication;

• Assessment; and

• Social Organisation.

Learning Tradition: **CBK working alongside children, families and community**. Learning traditions consist of the cultural processes within a community of learners. Identifying the learning traditions came about through joint analysis of the philosophy underpinning CBK's approach to programme planning and to working with the community. An analysis of the case study children's Learning Stories, the research team's field notes and interviews with children, families, teachers and specialists confirmed a ten year commitment to working with families and strengthening community through various initiatives such as SKIP[2] and HIPPY[3] and through the 303 Parent Centre. The success of the PSD programme fuelled a desire to spread the benefits across all four of the CBK early childhood centres. As the Director observed:

> … if you're building community and parents are feeling good about what's happening for them and for their child, and meeting other parents, developing relationships, that has that ripple effect in terms of wellbeing for everybody —family wellbeing.

She articulated what became the essence of the learning tradition of CBK:

> ... CBK is establishing a nurturing and caring environment where everyone feels they have a place to be and to build community, providing lots of different things that encourage parents to engage with other parents

Goals of education: to transform participation of learners (adults and children) to contribute, and to belong in ways which enhance community well being.

Staff at CBK had long been aware of gaps in their community service provision. The 303 Parent Centre proved instrumental in connecting and supporting parents.

Purpose of learning: The CBK community of learners intentionally involves others in shared endeavours to support the learning tradition.

Understanding the purpose facet of the prism necessitated research-based conversations, which pulled together shared understandings about the CBK learning traditions and goals of education. Important questions were asked: *To what extent were others involved in supporting the learning tradition? How do we know? And, by asking about "others", to what extent were we privileging some members of our community of learners?*

> *Director:* CBK is embedded within the Whanganui community. It's not something that just sits in there. We are very actively engaged and embedded in everything that happens in this city. What we offer here is a holistic service, an integrated service of early childhood centre at the centre.

This did not happen quickly or by accident. A distributed leadership model that worked across multiple contexts utilised the professional expertise of CBK staff. The Director's advocacy at a regional and national level was also enacted within CBK. The Family Support Worker engaged with parents at a community level, in homes and neighbourhoods; teachers worked with children and families in the centre and community. Purpose, in the prism sense, reflected an interrelated set of circumstances with positive outcomes:

> *Parent:* I've had a lot of…a lot of support, and that has benefited my family directly because I'm a better parent and we're a better family because of it. And yeah, I'm very grateful to the centre.

Means of learning: This involves CBK's everyday pedagogies that intentionally support the community of learners (adults and children) to contribute to the overall learning tradition, guided by community expectations and involvement.

Means of learning can often be interpreted very narrowly and our research focus aimed to extend our pedagogical practices from what were essentially child-centric programme plans to the wider world (Ministry of Education, 1996). This meant pedagogical discussions were not bound by our traditional centre-based curriculum goals. We attempted to think beyond the child's centre-based experience by using the child's experience in the community as the starting point for planning.

> *Teacher:* There's been lots of intentionally planned events, both within all of CBK, but also within each area—each team has organised their own events and involved parents, and that's been very successful.… And I'm sure that's made quite a difference *with* the parent-to-parent interactions. And the teachers go round at those events introducing parents, especially fathers because quite often they don't come into the centre. It's a time to scoop up all the family, and grandparents and all the whānau.

Communication: This involves establishing a shared understanding of the learning traditions and the purposes and goals underpinning the means of learning.

Effective communication is needed to co-ordinate the shared endeavours of the learning tradition and to further the CBK goals of education. Ideally communication has to be multi-modal and take into account children's and adults' ideas and opinions across a range of contexts and in a range of media. Because our research focus was on increasing parental engagement with the purpose of ECE, the next examples reflect how the means of learning and the goals of learning intersect to support a shared understanding of CBK traditions:

> *Parent*: I think coming into [parenting resource centre] it provides an environment for people to be able to share—a trusting environment where people feel free to tell people, share things, tell things, and then get alongside to support.

> *Family Support Worker*: One of the nice things is that we know that when we're linking parents into our community, that we've had the opportunity to make those links or those networks first, so we're not just sending them off to wherever to hook up for the social service or whatever: we know the people concerned.

Assessment: This involves analysing the shared actions of the community of learners, which may either facilitate or hinder the learning tradition.

The assessment facet is a tool. Using reflective questions, participants in the community of learners have a means of discussing the purpose of learning. This enabled consideration of whether the means of learning are fit for purpose; and whether new conclusions or shared understandings influence interpretations of the organisational culture or learning traditions.

This view of assessment takes a broad sweep and considers insider and outsider perspectives. In our research, we used 'take home' cameras and a set of questions to develop our "Out and About" tool which proved to be extremely revealing. Teacher assumptions about children and the role of CBK were exposed and even, in some cases, inaccurate. For example, a case study child described as shy and reluctant to join in at CBK was, in her family/whānau context, extremely out-going and independent even catching an Intercity bus by herself to stay with grandparents on a regular basis. When this was revealed to teachers, they were stunned and delighted. Families' input changed not only how teachers viewed the child, it also resulted in a reconceptualised analysis process during programme planning meetings:

> *Teacher*: It's definitely opened up doors for better relationships with parents and a more in depth teaching plan for the children, individually, as well as in a group, but individually.

> *Director:* Everybody's had to start, you know, looking for [the evidence], and bringing in all the voices. The

parents' voice particularly, bringing the parents voice into comment on how they see it, so that we're getting the different lens.

Social Organisation: This is the means by which decisions are made about the responsibilities and roles within the community of learners to enhance the learning tradition of CBK.

This facet was critical to our reconceptualising the relationships between and among the community of learners at CBK because, using our assessment tools, we were able to address the power imbalances we knew could so easily disrupt our relationships with parents and services in our community. Regularly attending to the ways in which an ECE service is organised ensures that the stated intentions, the learning traditions, and the purpose and means of learning are communicated with integrity. The faces of the prism need to reflect a recognisable whole. This hinges on how information, observations and pedagogical practices manifest internally and as well as externally. How this manifests is explained below:

> *Director:* We also do a huge amount of networking with agencies and services so that we can support, encourage, advocate for families when they're needing those other services, or wanting to access those other services.

> *Family Support Worker*: So we look for solutions *with* parents. It can be from a car park conversation; it can be a gate conversation. Often they happen at the end of the day or the end of a session. Parents will want to have a little bit more in-depth conversation, so it usually happens then.

How can use of the prism improve pedagogical practice?

Earlier we argued that theory is dynamic. Rogoff et al.'s prism model (2012) gave us a way to reconceptualise how we understood notions of partnership between children, parents, community and teachers. In this research, we were interested in shifting the traditional teacher/parent dyad with its child-centric focus to one that redistributed power more equitably and recognised that expertise resides across a range of contexts.

The seven facets of the prism model offer possibilities to assess these contexts in diverse ways. By observing and identifying aspects of our pedagogy using the prism, we can interrogate our practices to see if they *do* support families as partners in ECE services by encouraging parents to be more involved. This same model could be used to examine and understand different aspects of the teaching and learning experience in early education settings. Educators could use Rogoff's model directly, or amend and adjust, as we did, for the particular focus required.

In terms of this TLRI project, much of the context and detail is illustrated in online videos (see page 4). Outcomes for the CBK community are evident in how parents

became more visible for the teachers; teachers became more connected with the parents; and, parents became engaged in the wider CBK activities building links and networks within their communities. In this way both teachers and parents reconsidered their dual role in the learning lives of their children, in the parenting and teaching roles, and in the position and place of early childhood education in the community. All the adults in the child's life became more strongly connected and more learning experiences were shared—within the centre, within the home, and within the community.

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Endnotes

1. This project was carried out 2010-2013 and was funded by the New Zealand Teaching and Learning Research Initiative grant (see www.tlri.org.nz). For a summary of the project see: http://www.tlri.org.nz/tlri-research/research-progress/ece-sector/active-adult-participation-ece-enhancing-learning-and

2. SKIP stands for Strategies with Kids/Information for Parents

3. HIPPY stands for Home Interaction Programme for Parents and Youngsters

Crossing boundaries to build communities

Comparative early childhood education services: International perspectives (Critical Cultural Studies of Childhood)

Judith Duncan and Sarah Te One (Editors)

Palgrave Macmillan, 2012

Reviewer: Mari Pighini

A book of this caliber demands an in-depth review that depicts the multiple shades, the breadth, and the depth of its contents. To honour these dimensions, I wear my tricorn hat: as an early childhood educator, university instructor, and researcher. In this way, I attempt to convey the richness, and diversity of ideas that deeply intrigued me. I appreciated the flexibility of the book that allows for reading in no particular order. However, I recommend first completing chapter 1, and making it a point to integrate the different threads and strands through the very powerful final chapter.

The international component in this book brings together current work from Australia, US, and Canada in chapters 3 (Sumsion, Press, & Wong), 6 (Joanou, Holiday, & Swadener) and 10 (Goelman & Pivik). This integration of work from three different countries which I found to both inform and validate early childhood care and education practices (ECEC) in Aotearoa New Zealand that are firmly grounded in Māori and Pasifika values. Such practices are extensively documented in chapters 2 (Duncan, Te One, & Thomas), 4 (Munford, Sanders, & Maden), chapter 5 (Duncan), 7 (Lee), and 9 (Jones, Holmes, & McLure).

I draw from Carl Dunst's research in early childhood intervention (Dunst, Hamby, Trivette, Raab, & Bruder, 2000) in describing my experience of the comparative lens utilized in this book being framed within 'naturally occurring' issues, in terms of the reported research, and built on 'everyday activities' in the ECEC world.

It is, perhaps, this natural flow of ideas in the different chapters that makes this book not only incredibly informative, but accessible to a varied audience that may include professionals, academics, researchers, and administrators/ government officials. I highlight aspects and themes throughout the book that may appeal different readers; at the same time, the organization of this review does not intend to box in particular chapters for specific audiences, as each one of the chapters skillfully weaves in the different cultures of "science, policy, and practice," in Jack Shonkoff's seminal

work (Shonkoff, 2000), and highlighted in Goelman & Pivik's chapter 10.

I begin with a focus on the book's ECEC professional audience: early childhood teachers. In the short time that their busy days allow, mostly spent 'on the floor,' that is, in direct contact with children and parents and whānau, early childhood educators seek to expand their horizons about current education issues. These issues are linked to social, and policy aspects that knowingly or subversively may impact their daily practices with children, families, and interactions with their colleagues.

In their chapter, Judith Duncan, Sarah Te One, & Maureen Thomas focus on parent empowerment and inclusion through the notions of 'connectedness' and 'belonging' as evident in the daily 'ins' and 'outs' of centre life. These reflect how use of space and time matter when fostering meaningful connections between parents and with teachers.

From the perspectives of communities – and families that belong and form these communities – issues of connectedness are also very clearly presented in other chapters; one using the Te Aroha Noa and one drawing from the Supporting Parents alongside their Children's Education (SPACE) programme. All three chapters are strongly grounded in Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework (Bronfenbrenner, 1979).

Further ahead, in Deborah Lee's chapter, the notions of 'hospitality as host' and 'hospitality as curriculum' illuminate teachers' practices that already show commitment to walk away from 'Othering'. In the name of universal rights, these teachers acknowledge the important visibility of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) parents, as well as parents/families that do not conform to the norm.

Academics will also find the content important and
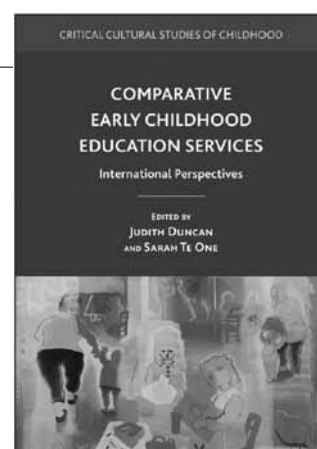
relevant enough for their advanced undergraduate and for graduate students. This book considers clear examples of theory-enlightened practices. For example, using two well-established childcare centres in Australia as setting for two distinct case studies, Jennifer Sumsion, Frances Press, and Sandie M. Wong eloquently illustrate the connections between service models that favour universality and continuity of ECEC services. These authors highlight the theoretical principles that guide the centres, and that hold the key for their success after decades of work with children and families of diverse ethno-linguistic and family structures.

A similar approach to theory-practice connections – and with an undoubtedly link to policy – is visible in the chapter by Jamie P. Joanou, Dawn Holiday, and Beth Blue Swadener in which the authors take on a 'Funds of Knowledge' perspective to present a viable alternative to the existing ECEC models of service provided in the southwestern US state of Arizona. The authors explain how the existing political and administrative neoliberal-guided discourse is preventing, instead of fostering, access to existing services, and how this discourse alienates an invisible majority of Spanish-speaking children and families. Examples from interviewed parents reveal how they do not perceive themselves as represented, nor are they invited to partake in the early childhood programmes that are supposedly available for them. In failing to draw on the riches of immigrant and refugee 'funds of knowledge', those in power are sent an alert about a missed opportunity.

Researchers, and especially those whose work is guided through action and participatory research practices, will find their work not only validated, but their views also expanded. The research basis for this book includes inspiring findings from context-specific and, at the same time, universally important case studies as well as through the ingenious, and at the same time, ingenuous, research model presented by Hillel Goelman and Jayne Pivik. Through The Consortium for Health, Intervention, Learning and Development (CHILD) Project, Goelman and Pivik describe how the seemingly impossible became a reality when play, (the most 'natural occurrence' of all), becomes the means by which researchers, academics, and practitioners meet each other in a multiple-terrain playground; thus connecting neonatal science, social policy, early child development and early child education. In other ways, the CHILD Project and its 10 studies pioneered the ECEC research scene in Canada by daring to bring both "biomedical and social determinant perspectives" to "generate knowledge in early child development" (p. 193) using different methodologies that spanned quantitative, data-based, to qualitative and

participatory studies. Importantly, this also included research where indigenous learning and teachings led the research agenda, and not the other way around.

Finally, the description and the findings of the research presented – supported through testimonials from parents and educators—also provide an essential source of information for administrators and policy makers. Indeed, in their chapter, Liz Jones, Rachel Holmes, and Maggie MacLure present an eloquent case for a non-traditional ECEC setting: the Mother-Baby Unit in a jail setting. They use discourse analysis to examine the power and intent of the language used by care providers to shape the identities of the moms in jail in terms of what 'good parenting' means and its impact on the mother-child relationship.

Perhaps the most powerful content and one that will resonate with all audiences, is found at the end. In the final chapter, Judith Duncan and Sarah Te One invite readers to "cross borders" to "build communities" (pp. 213-14). Duncan and Te One insist on the power of families – 'heart' and 'hearth' and narrate the experiences lived by the ECEC communities in trying to support children and families in the aftermath of the earthquakes that shook Christchurch, New Zealand. Their testimonials, with description of parallel events and situations drawn with other places, (such as Japan that experienced similar natural disasters), provide the most powerful contextualization of what ECEC is, and what it means to children, families, and service providers alike: a life-line that ensures that health and well-being are supported and maintained at all costs through the magic, and yet critical, early childhood years.

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He Wai Whakariporipo

Making waves in Early Childhood – surviving the storm

11th Early Childhood Convention
1 - 5 October 2015
Rotorua Energy Events Centre, Rotorua

ECE and CSE: Reframing the relationship

Early childhood and compulsory education: Reconceptualising the relationship.

Peter Moss (Editor)

Routledge, London, UK. 2013.

Reviewer: Alison Warren

The *Contesting Early Childhood* series (Routledge) has, since 2005, analysed dominant discourses in early childhood education and provided thoughtful and provocative alternatives, such as Reggio Emilia, theorists such as Foucault and Deleuze, and discourses of social justice and democracy. Editors are Gunilla Dahlberg of Stockholm University and Peter Moss of the Institute of Education University of London.

In the ninth book in the series, Peter Moss addresses alternative ways of framing the relationship between early childhood education (ECE) and compulsory school education (CSE). The result is *Early childhood and compulsory education: Reconceptualising the relationship.*

The focus is narrow: mainly European countries, United States and New Zealand. The inevitable trade-off between breadth and depth is, in my opinion, justified by the impressive depth of discussion. There is scope for a future volume in this series, exploring relationships between ECE and CSE in more minority and majority world countries. Moss also acknowledges the absence of contributors from CSE (as this book series focuses on ECE), and invites CSE responses to ideas put forward. Ironically, Moss comments on the lack of occasions when ECE and CSE educators meet and collaborate. Interested ECE and CSE educators may wish to seek 'meeting places' in their own countries in response to this book's conceptualisations of their relationship.

Peter Moss opens the discussion with an introductory essay that presents three conceptualisations of the relationship between ECE and CSE. The dominant discourse of ECE 'readying' children for CSE positions ECE as less powerful in the education hierarchy than CSE, and views learning in terms of meeting standards associated with skills such as literacy and numeracy. This discourse has resulted in 'schoolification' of ECE in many countries, including England and the United States.

The second conceptualisation is that of a 'strong and equal partnership', which views ECE and CSE in dialogue as equal partners, each with something to offer the other. Moss draws on two OECD cross-national reports covering 20 countries, *Starting Strong I* (2001) and *Starting Strong II* (2006). These reports express concern about 'schoolification' of ECE, and broadly distinguish between two views of ECE in the countries reviewed: readiness for school (English-speaking countries and France) and social pedagogy (Nordic and Central European countries).

The third conceptualisation is 'the vision of a meeting place', and is based on a 1994 paper by Swedish academics Gunilla Dahlberg and Hillevi Lenz Taguchi. The brief was to examine integration of ECE and CSE in Sweden, and associated possibilities and risks. National responsibility for ECE, which was a strong and integrated system, was being transferred from welfare to education. The 'meeting place' is conceptualised as an encounter where ECE and CSE share visions and traditions to develop a common view. Moss makes links to his call for participatory democracy in his co-authored book *Ethics and politics in early childhood education* (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005).

The second part of the book consists of authors responses: firstly from John Bennett, who co-authored the *Starting Strong* reports, and secondly, a chapter from Gunilla Dahlberg based on discussions with Peter Moss about the 1994 'meeting place' paper. Bennett describes examples of strong and equal partnerships between ECE and CSE in the Nordic countries, where respect for ECE is associated with high regard for children and their services, a strong integrated ECE system and a strongly theorised ECE identity. He advocates for ECE values such as relational pedagogies in the wider education field. Bennett supports Dahlberg and Lenz Taguchi's 'meeting place' vision, and
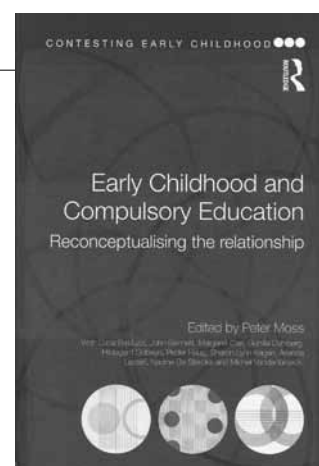
suggests some practical steps towards creating these places.

Dahlberg adds valuable background information and depth to the discussion on her co-authored paper. In her opinion, Swedish ECE and CSE in 1994 needed to change to reach a common vision of the child "as a constructor of knowledge and culture; a rich child" (p. 84). The idea of a meeting place or encounter is based on 'ethics of an encounter' where each respects the difference of the other, and does not try to make the other the same.

In the following five chapters, contributors respond to the introductory essay and conceptualisations of the relationship between ECE and CSE in their own countries. The chapter by Margaret Carr is titled 'Making a borderland of contested spaces into a meeting place' and considers children negotiating multiple scripts and hybrid identities as they cross borders and inhabit borderlands between ECE and CSE settings in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Margaret Carr explores possible meeting places in contested relational spaces: between curriculum documents in ECE and CSE, between learning dispositions and subject knowledges, and between families and education services. She draws on New Zealand research into transitions between ECE and CSE to identify three key domains for developing dialogue: teachers as researchers, a permeable curriculum on either side of the border, and documentation as boundary object.

In chapter five, Peder Haug articulates a recurring theme of the book: that education and relationships between ECE and CSE are historically shaped by social values and living conditions. In Norway, the central social value of family, and late urbanisation led to general indifference towards ECE before the 1970s. When the school entry age was lowered, government policy enabled ECE to influence CSE for the youngest school children (strong and equal partnership). However, the present situation is one of CSE influencing ECE (schoolification).

Chapter six is contributed by Sharon Lynn Kagan from the United States, where school readiness is dominant, and ECE is fragile, inconsistent and powerless in relation to CSE. She suggests that relationships of equality may be idealised and unattainable, and that fundamental learning experiences of continuity and transition are inhibited by factors like different pedagogical traditions and inconclusive research. Kagan suggests rethinking transitions as positive rather than problematic, and developing pedagogical, programmatic and policy alignment between ECE and CSE.

Arianna Lazzari and Lucia Balduzzi discuss educational continuity in Italian contexts, where commitment to socially agreed democratic values and local innovation allowed a distinctive ECE pedagogical identity to emerge based on the image of the child as an active agent, rich in potential. Education reforms in the 1970s in Bologna initiated a pedagogical meeting place of dialogue between ECE and CSE. In 1992, national policy gave ECE and CSE equal status, and obliged them to work in partnership to facilitate transitions that enhanced children's well-being. In recent years, neoliberal policies have narrowed the focus on ECE to preparation for CSE.

Three authors from Flanders in Belgium, Michel Vandenbroeck, Nadine de Stercke and Hildegard Gobeyn, critique a dominant view of ECE as primarily a contributor to later CSE outcomes. Despite Flanders having universal, free ECE provision for children from two and a half years, focusing on quality ECE as preparation for CSE has not led to equitable education outcomes for children living in poverty. Situating readiness in the child is evident in language testing of children who have not attended a minimum period in ECE. Instead, the authors advocate for education services to develop their readiness for children through strong relationships with parents.

Peter Moss draws threads of the contributions together in his concluding reflections. He asks for a move from the technical question 'how best can ECE ready children for compulsory schooling?' to the political question 'what do we want?' His answer is relationships of democratic politics, not technical expertise.

Returning to his vision of ECE as participatory democracy, Moss calls for a transformational 'meeting place' vision of the relationship between ECE and CSE. He acknowledges practical difficulties, but is heartened by some practices of continuity and collaboration, such as the alignment between ECE and CSE curriculum frameworks in New Zealand.

This book provides in-depth exploration of relationships between ECE and CSE from scholars who thoughtfully critique their countries' ECE and CSE systems and how the relationships between ECE and CSE have been shaped by traditions and values. In deciding to limit the discussion to contributors from a few affluent countries, Moss has enabled valuable depth of discussion.

A future direction for the *Contesting Early Childhood* series may be to explore majority world perspectives in similar depth, with scholars from these countries critiquing their own contexts, as the contributors to this book have done so effectively.

References

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Jack Shallcrass

1922-2014

I am much indebted to Jack Shallcrass for his interest in and support of my career in education. I also acknowledge him as one of New Zealand's great educators of the 20th century.

Jack Shallcrass retired from Victoria University in the mid 1980s and so is possibly not well known by many educators today. However, I would like to acknowledge his inspirational contribution to teacher education in this country both at Wellington Teachers' College and later Victoria University Wellington.

Jack was well known for his monthly articles on education in the NZ *Listener* which ran for many years and his role as the country's main media commentator on education. He authored or edited a number of books, including: *Forward to basics; Educating New Zealanders; Secondary schools in change;* and (with John Ewing), *An introduction to Maori education.*

Jack was a left wing radical and politically active as an educator, yet he was loved by everyone. He was a behind the scenes supporter of many new initiatives in early childhood education. He was a good friend of Gwen Somerset, whom he interviewed, and similarly he conducted one of the rare interviews with Sylvia Ashton Warner. Jack was a member of the Victoria University Creche Advisory Committee and when the Early Childhood Workers Union was struggling to get established in the early 1980s, he discreetly made a regular financial contribution into our ailing bank account.

I was privileged to be one of Jack's students at Victoria University in the late 1970s-early 1980s. He not only introduced us in stage 1 to the radical thinkers in education of the time, such as Paolo Freire (*Pedagogy of the oppressed*) and Ivan Illich (*Deschooling society*), he also practiced a radical approach to learning and teaching that provided us with the opportunity to think and read and wonder. I spent a year reading the works of Karl Popper in one of Jack's courses; and another year, I read Jean Paul Sartre.

Jack did not produce course outlines, set objectives or require assignments – but we read, debated, shared and talked and worked so hard. I still have my notes. Each of us determined our own pathway of learning under Jack's guidance and support and at the end of the course, we had the scary experience of negotiating our grade (which the university required).

I was fortunate to have Jack as a supervisor of my master's thesis on the Politics of Childcare that became my stepping stone towards an academic career in early childhood education. Jack was the person who encouraged (insisted) that I should do a doctorate, for which he arranged generous scholarship support for three years.

He will possibly be best remembered by his students for gently leading us into new ways of thinking and encouraging us to forge our own pathways. He worked hard behind the scenes to get his students placed into positions across the institutions of education in this country and he counselled us wisely. I treasure the various references he wrote for me - some successful, such as the position of Co-ordinating Supervisor at the Victoria University Creche, a position I held from 1978-1983. Other positions I did not get!

At a seminar at Victoria University to celebrate Jack's 80th birthday, together with long time my friend Sue Middleton (a creche parent whose daughter was friends with my daughter, and who was also in Jack's courses), we did a powerpoint presentation entitled: 'Jack Shallcrass: Making a difference: A tribute from former students'. By then we were both Professors of Education. We would not have imagined that to be possible when we were students, but it was Jack who launched us on the journey.

In a book, Sue Middleton and I wrote on 20th century education ideas entitled 'Teachers Talk Teaching' (1997), Jack was one of the interviewees. He told how: "Freire came to stay with me when he was in New Zealand in 1975. He was really the genesis of my university teaching in the last 10 years at the university. How do you empower people? That was a constant doubting question. How do you actually make people part of the process, a significant part of the process without merely appearing to do it?"

Sue and I were so fortunate to be Jack's students at that time.

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Contributors

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Christine Rietveld worked as a kindergarten teacher and itinerant teacher supporting the inclusion of children with impairments from an early intervention programme into their local early childhood settings. Whilst working as a practitioner, Christine commenced her research programme focusing on the lived experiences of children with Down Syndrome in regular early childhood and primary school settings. Her ongoing research and publications have been influential in NZ teacher education. As well as engaging in research, Christine lectures and tutors in inclusive education at the University of Canterbury.
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Sarah Te One has had over 25 years of experience in early education as a teacher, researcher, lecturer, unionist, and as a parent. Her interests focus on children's perspectives and influence on education and social policy, parent and community partnerships in education and advocacy for children's rights across a range of disciplines. Sarah is currently self-employed and working as a researcher in early education and as a facilitator on Te Puni Kokiri's Maori Warden Project delivering Child Rights Advocacy Training. She is also on the Executive for Action for Children and Youth Aotearoa, sharing the role of Education Policy Advisor, a voluntary position.

Alison Warren holds the position of Leader Education Delivery at the Nelson teaching base of Te Tari Puna Ora o Aotearoa/New Zealand Childcare Association. Her e.c. started with the Playcentre movement alongside her own children. She also has experience as a visiting teacher for a home-based e.c. and in childcare centres. Alison is a doctoral student at University of Canterbury, researching the topic of teachers' emotions. Her research interests are teacher identities, professionalism, bicultural teaching practice, and poststructural and posthumanist theories. Contact: alison.warren@nzca.ac.nz