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Te Puawaitanga: Partnerships with tamariki and whānau in bicultural early childhood care and education

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Dedication

This report is dedicated to the memory of Fred Kana, our dear friend and colleague. Moe mai rā, e hoa.

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We are grateful to the many Kindergarten Associations of our partner educators for allowing this research to proceed. We particularly wish to acknowledge and thank all our research partners who have shared this journey with us:

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Research facilitator

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1. Contexts for the research

Whakawhanaungatanga, Tiriti-based partnership, and narrative methodologies

This project has extended upon knowledges gained from a previous Teaching and Learning Research Initiative (TLRI) research project, *Whakawhanaungatanga—Partnerships in Bicultural Development in Early Childhood Care and Education* (the Whakawhanaungatanga project) (Ritchie & Rau, 2006), which focused on identifying strategies used by early childhood educators, professional development providers, teacher educators, and an iwi education initiative. This kaupapa is consistent with the bicultural mandate contained within key regulatory and curriculum statements. These include the Ministry of Education's Desirable Objectives and Practices (DOPs) (Ministry of Education, 1996a) requirement 10c, whereby management and educators are required to implement policies, objectives, and practices that "reflect the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua and the principle of partnership inherent in Te Tiriti o Waitangi", and the national early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b), which states that "In early childhood settings, all children should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi" (p. 9). *Te Whāriki* has been acknowledged as progressive in its sociocultural orientation (Nuttall, 2002, 2003) which emphasises the valuing of diverse identities (Grieshaber, Cannella, & Leavitt, 2001) and acknowledges a kaupapa based in the partnership that is signified in Te Tiriti o Waitangi (Ka'ai, Moorfield, Reilly, & Mosley, 2004).

Recent research has identified three general characteristics of effective partnerships in education settings:

- acknowledging the mana or expertise of each partner in the sense of the tino rangatiratanga that was guaranteed to Māori people in the Treaty of Waitangi
- working collaboratively with the partner in culturally competent ways that allows the partner to define what culture means to them.
- learning from the partner and changing one's own behaviour accordingly (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003, p. 202).

Current theorising in early childhood education and elsewhere has highlighted the importance of sociocultural approaches to pedagogical work (Anning, Cullen, & Fleer, 2004; Fleer, 2002; Rogoff, 2003), as well as the growing influence of narrative approaches to documentation (Carr, 2000b; Carr, Hatherly, Lee, & Ramsay, 2003; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Ministry of

Education, 2004; Rinaldi, 2006). Access to the narratives of others can offer alternative patterns for operating our lives (Richardson, 1997), with these transformative narratives functioning within the collective sociocultural domain and becoming "a part of the cultural heritage affecting future stories and future lives" (p. 33). Hence, narrative inquiry provides pathways whereby the transformative possibilities of collective storying can affect both educational cultures and the lived experiences of tamariki/children and whānau/families. Co-researchers in the current project, Te Puawaitanga, have explored and documented some ways in which the transformative potential (Cullen, 2003) of *Te Whāriki* is being realised.

This project, in enacting a Tiriti-based model throughout its design and implementation, also has resonance with kaupapa Māori, decolonising, and Indigenous research methodologies and theorising (Bishop, 2005; Colbung, Glover, Rau, & Ritchie, 2007; Jackson, 2007; Kaomea, 2004; Martin, 2007; Newhouse, 2004; G. H. Smith, 1997; L. T. Smith, 1999, 2005; Stairs, 2004).While early childhood educators are required to demonstrate that their programme delivery is consistent with *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996a, 1996b), there is evidence that many centres fall short in the depth to which they are able to deliver genuinely bicultural programmes. In 2004, an Education Review Office Education (ERO) evaluation reported that in relation to DOP 10c, whereby early childhood centres should "reflect the unique place of Māori as tangata whenua and the principle of partnership inherent in Te Tiriti o Waitangi":

> Responsiveness to "the principle of partnership inherent in Te Tiriti o Waitangi" suggests a broad view of the intent of this DOP. For example this could include explicit structures to give effect to a Māori voice within services. However this broad understanding of the Treaty is only patchily adopted and none of the reports used for this report provided information on such structures. (Education Review Office, 2004, p. 9)

The ERO evaluation concluded that "provision for diversity of cultures needs to move beyond tokenism to a deeper understanding of how service provision impacts on different cultures" (2004, p. 16). This situation has implications for teacher educators and professional development providers (Cherrington & Wansbrough, 2007; Ritchie, 2002). Research that articulates children's and whānau voices has the potential to further extend educators' understandings and implementation of ways of enacting Māori values and beliefs, enabling them to enhance the effectiveness of their education programmes, through an increased capacity to initiate and sustain responsive, respectful relationships with children, parents, and whānau. Warm, receptive, reciprocal relationships are fundamental to effective early childhood pedagogy (Ministry of Education, 1996b), and strategies which might enhance intercultural relationships are critical for effective teaching and learning in the Aotearoa/New Zealand context.

From the collaborative exploration of the narratives derived from the Whakawhanaungatanga project, the following findings emerged, serving as a framework for this second TLRI project, Te Puawaitanga:

- educators working in partnerships in which Māori were supportive of Pākehā who demonstrated a genuine receptivity and openness to multiple ways of being, knowing, and enactment of pedagogies
- bicultural development was enhanced by ongoing committed relationships instigated and sustained by educators sensitive to and reflective of Māori ways of being, knowing, and doing
- bicultural development was sustained when institutions and the individuals within them were committed to generating space for Māori leadership and visibility throughout the organisation
- experiences reflective of tikanga Māori enriched the early childhood programme for the benefit of all children and families involved, but were particularly significant in their affirmation of Māori children's identity formation, and in engendering positive attitudes among non-Māori children towards Māori people and constructs
- there was evidence that early childhood educators' fostering of a bicultural centre culture can have transformative potential beyond the early childhood centre and into the community
- there was a willingness within the early childhood community to embrace the Tiriti-based expectations of Te Whāriki, which can be nurtured with increased availability of resources to support these endeavours
- Māori engagement, participation, responsiveness, and contribution in early childhood settings was enhanced through programmes in which educators affirmed and enacted Māori values
- Māori educators and whānau preferred early childhood education programmes to reflect the tikanga appropriate to the local mana whenua
- early childhood education initiatives and models that were led by Māori reflected an inclusiveness towards non-Māori in keeping with Māori values of manaakitanga and the partnership inherent in Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The teacher co-researchers who were our research partners in the Whakawhanaungatanga study (Ritchie & Rau, 2006) had participated integrally in both data collection and theorising and they were also involved in generating the proposal for the current project. During workshops and discussions following various presentations where we had reported on the cumulative progress of that first TLRI (Ritchie & Rau, 2004, 2005a, 2005b, 2005c), we were often approached by educators, Māori, Pākehā, and Tauiwi, from a range of rural and urban, and both teacher and parent-led centres (Playcentre, kindergarten, and childcare), for whom our work had resonance. Many expressed their interest in sharing a research journey focusing on bicultural development, which we are now terming as "Tiriti-based practice". The current project has continued to build upon existing collaborative relationships. We consider relationships to be central not only to pedagogical processes (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007), but also to research (Ritchie, 2002). This focus on the "centrality of relationships" (Elliot, 2007, p. 155) shapes this study, with its focus on documenting narratives of lived experiences of educators, children, and whānau within biculturally-committed early childhood centres.

This project employed narrative methodologies to provide rich, in-depth narrative accounts that give voice to key "stakeholders" within early childhood education, including children. Henry Giroux has quoted Ngugi Wa Thiong'O (n.d.):

> Children are the future of any society. If you want to know the future of a society look at the eyes of the children. If you want to maim the future of any society, you simply maim the children. The struggle for the survival of our children is the struggle for the survival of our future. The quantity and quality of that survival is the measurement of the development of our society" (as cited in Henry Giroux, 2000, p.1).

Children's voices have previously often gone unheard in both research and policy making. Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu has highlighted the need to listen to children (as cited in Kirkwood, 2001), and this insight is supported by "a growing body of research suggesting that the participation of children in genuine decision making in school and neighbourhood has many positive outcomes" (Prout, 2000, p. 312). In Aotearoa, we have seen the beginnings of efforts towards respectful inclusion of children's perspectives (Carr, 2000a; Ministry of Social Development, 2004; A. B. Smith, Taylor, & Gollop, 2000). In Australia, Glenda MacNaughton's work has led the way in terms of the inclusion of children's voice in both research and policy making (MacNaughton, Rolfe, & Siraj-Blatchford, 2001; MacNaughton, Smith, & Lawrence, 2003). MacNaughton, Smith, and Lawrence (2003) have written that:

> The recent increased interest in giving children a voice in decisions about them and services for them has accompanied the emergence of new images of the young child, increased interest in enacting children's rights in the public sphere, and increased scientific knowledge about the importance of children's early experiences for their future as competent citizens. (MacNaughton, Smith, & Lawrence, 2003, p. 14).

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child continues to highlight issues around children's participation as "full actors" in their lives (Kiro, 2005). We clearly still have "much more to learn about how to make organisations better attuned to participation, how to engage children in serious dialogue" as we seek new approaches based in a recognition of the need to include children's voices (Prout, 2000, p. 313) within both pedagogical and research practices. Power effects are insidious, requiring a conscious effort of a process of mindful revisibilisation in order to generate a discourse of inclusion of children's voices. As Giroux (2000) suggests,

> . . . the politics of culture provide the conceptual space in which childhood is constructed, experienced, and struggled over. Culture is the primary terrain in which adults exercise power over children both ideologically and institutionally. Only by questioning the specific cultural formations and contexts in which childhood is organized, learned, and lived can educators understand and challenge the ways in which cultural practices establish specific power relations that shape children's experiences. (p. 4)

Yet the ominous challenge remains for researchers, in seeking to elicit and honour children's voices, as to how we can find ways to understand children's worlds through adult eyes.

A Ministry of Education best evidence synthesis, *The Complexity of Community and Family Influences on Children's Achievement in New Zealand* (Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003, p.

149) has reiterated that educational provision is “most effective when operated from a partnership and empowering or strengthening approach that is responsive to the particular people and contexts involved”. As Clandinin and Connelly (2000) have pointed out, context is central to narrative inquiry. We consider that narrative research is a powerful tool (Florio-Ruane, 2001) for modelling transformative understandings about issues of culture and identities, providing rich data illustrative of the shared journeys (Rau & Ritchie, 2005). While data collection in the current study, Te Puawaitanga, has focused on a diverse group of tamariki/children and whānau/families, it has simultaneously provided an avenue for the experiences and voices of Māori educators, tamariki, and whānau Māori to be prioritised. This is consistent with current government early childhood policy. The Ministry of Education’s (2002) strategic plan for early childhood contains “a focus on collaborative relationships for Māori”, which seeks to “create an environment where the wider needs of Māori children, their parents, and whānau(families) are recognised and acknowledged” (p. 16), where opportunities are generated for whānau, hapū, and iwi to work with early childhood services, and early childhood services are encouraged to become more responsive to the needs of Māori children (Ministry of Education, 2002).

Continuing this research spotlight on changing “mainstream” early childhood practice to be more reflective of diversity was particularly salient given that demographic projections indicate “that by 2040 the majority of children in our early childhood centres and primary schools will be Māori and Pasifika” (Biddulph, Biddulph, & Biddulph, 2003, p. 10). The project’s grounding in a whanaungatanga approach to bicultural development in early childhood provision (Ritchie, 2001, 2002; Ritchie & Rau, 2006), has provided a spotlight on ways in which bicultural approaches consistent with *Te Whāriki* may foster Māori involvement in early childhood services, through the visible affirmation and validation of Māori ways of being, knowing, and doing. The current study broadened its lens to enhance our understandings of the experiences of the wider early childhood centre collective, highlighting experiences of a diverse range of both Māori and other children and families. In doing so it has illuminated ways that experienced early childhood educators are implementing culturally focused programmes which enhance the cultural learnings and affirm the diverse identities of children and families. It has enabled the voices of these key “stakeholders”—the children and their families—to be heard. This has been achieved by working with the early childhood educators, children, and families to document, validate, and explore the narratives of a geographically and ethnically diverse group of participants.

Aims and objectives of the research

The aims and objectives of the research were to:

- document the narratives of a diverse group of children and families as they engage with early childhood education and care services committed to honouring the bicultural intent of the early childhood curriculum document *Te Whāriki*

- work collaboratively with colleagues and alongside tamariki/children and whānau/families to co-theorise bicultural pathways which are empowering for all participants within that service—Māori, Pākehā, and Tauiwi. This project not only continues a focus of our earlier work on tamariki/whānau Māori within early childhood, but also expands to highlight the experiences of educators, children, and families from a diverse range of ethnicities
- give voice to the perspectives of children, parents, and caregivers on their experiences of bicultural early childhood education.

Research questions

The research questions were:

- How can narrative methodologies enhance our reflective understandings as educators on a bicultural journey?
- How do the tamariki/children and whānau/families (Māori, Pākehā, and Tauiwi) experience and respond to the bicultural programmes within these early childhood settings?
- In what ways are Māori/Pākehā/Tauiwi educators committed to a Tiriti-based curriculum paradigm, enacting ways of being that are enabling of cross-cultural understandings and that embrace tamariki/children and whānau/families of different ethnicities from their own?

The research objectives and questions are consistent with the desired outcomes of the TLRI in that they build upon the cumulative body of knowledge that links the teaching and learning already achieved with the Whakawhanaungatanga project. Existing collaborative relationships between the co-directors and professional colleagues that had formed the backbone of the Whakawhanaungatanga project were further sustained and enhanced through the focus of the current Te Puawaitanga project. Furthermore, this project has explored the use of narrative methodologies consistent with, and that enhance, the existing focus on narrative pedagogies and assessment within education in Aotearoa/New Zealand (Carr, 2000a; Ministry of Education, 2004). Narrative pedagogy, assessment, and research methodologies reflect a commitment to collective processes, recognising that communities of learning are strengthened through the co-construction and negotiation of shared meanings (Jordan, 2004).

Ngā hua rautaki/Strategic value of this project

Addressing issues of diversity and disparity

Current government policy recognises the importance of early childhood care and education, yet discrepancies in terms of participation for Māori are an ongoing concern (New Zealand Parliament, 2007a).

According to the latest government report into socioeconomic disparities, Māori continue to be "disproportionately represented in lower socioeconomic strata (for example, lower income, no qualifications, no car access)" and that there are "widening inequalities in socioeconomic resources between Māori and non-Māori" (Ministry of Health, 2006, p. xii). Māori early childhood education participation rates continue to sit below those of non-Māori, while the proportion of Māori children aged 0-4 years is expected to increase from 27 percent in 2001 to 30 percent in 2021 (Ministry of Education, 2005).

A recent Ministry of Education-funded review of its Promoting Participation in Early Childhood Education project found that "For all Māori families, having access to ECE environments that supported Māori cultural practices and language was a key factor in participation" (Dixon, Widdowson, Meagher-Lundberg, C. McMurchy-Pilkington, & A. McMurchy-Pilkington, 2007, p. 52). Meanwhile, there continues to be scrutiny of the low participation of Māori in early childhood education, as evidenced in the terms of reference of a current "wide-ranging and time-consuming" (New Zealand Parliament, 2007a, p. 3) Māori Affairs Select Committee Inquiry into Māori Participation in Early Childhood Education; these terms of reference are to:

- examine economic and social factors, barriers, and family (whānau) influence affecting Māori participation rates in various education programmes
- examine the effectiveness of governance arrangements for publicly funded early childhood education initiatives, and their effects on Māori
- inquire into the appropriate interventions to increase and enhance Māori participation in early childhood education. (New Zealand Parliament, 2007b, p. 4)

The recent *Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success: Māori Education Strategy, 2008-2012* (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 11) considers that there are still "a number of challenges for Māori children in early childhood education, such as the level and frequency of participation and a lack of quality options" which are indicated in the statistics which show that only:

- 87 percent of Māori children who start school in decile 1–4 schools have participated in early childhood education, compared to 94.5 percent of children overall (more than two-thirds of Māori children start school in decile 1–4 schools
- the number of Kōhanga Reo has been decreasing, from 562 in 2001 to 486 in 2006. (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 11)

The strategy considers that "continuing to increase participation by Māori children in high quality early childhood education remains a priority" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 11).

The Best Evidence Synthesis prepared for the Ministry of Education on Quality Teaching Early Foundations (Farquhar, 2003) emphasises "the importance of cultural match" between home and education setting and recognises that "Ensuring a match of cultures across socialisation settings is a complex characteristic of quality teaching for teachers to meet" (p.23). In research by Hohepa, Hinangaroa Smith, Tuhiwai Smith, and McNaughton (cited in Alton-Lee, 2003, p.35), an analysis

of the integration of Māori cultural norms such as whanaungatanga demonstrated "the importance of making explicit and developing cultural norms that support students, not only in strong cultural identity and social development, but also in their achievement". It is now recognised that "Māori children and students are more likely to achieve when they see themselves reflected in the teaching content, and are able to be 'Māori' in all learning contexts" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 21). The same notion is applicable in terms of attracting whānau Māori to involve their tamariki in early childhood education.

The kaupapa of the current project was consistent with the Ministry of Education (2002) strategic plan for early childhood, Pathways to the Future, that emphasises the following three specific goals for Māori:

- to enhance the relationship between the Crown and Māori
- to improve the appropriateness and effectiveness of early childhood education services for Māori
- to increase the participation of Māori children and their whānau.

Involvement with the current project provided a mechanism "for Māori parents and educators to influence teacher education, professional development and other programmes and initiatives that support ECE services to be more responsive to Māori children" (Ministry of Education, 2002, p.13). The project also contributes to knowledge regarding effective education for Māori children and whānau within early childhood education, as well as highlighting ways in which inclusive bicultural pedagogies validate and affirm diverse cultural identities.

Strengthening pedagogical practice

This current project contributes to understandings of bicultural development in early childhood care and education, and the ways it is experienced both by Māori and others. There are distinct possibilities that the implementation of culturally aware programmes with a bicultural development focus will contribute to a widening of cross-cultural understandings (Rhedding-Jones, 2001), and an enhancement of the acceptance of the validity of multiple world views. The collaborative nature of this project enhances links between research and practice, and addresses the TLRI strategic value of recognition of the educational challenges of providing for diversity with the intended outcome of reducing inequalities through enhanced educational involvement and outcomes for tamariki Māori, building capacity for inter-institutional research capacity, and ongoing practitioner reflection and analysis.

Ngā hua rangahau/Research value

This research has drawn upon both international and New Zealand research and new research paradigms. Julie Kaomea (2003, 2004), an Indigenous Hawaiian education researcher, has

developed innovative methodology for seeking children's voices and giving voice to marginalised perspectives. She has also employed an eclectic range of theoretical tools in her data analysis. We have been interested in exploring the potential to adapt some of the methodological and theoretical ideas that Kaomea has described in our collaborative attempts to develop effective methodologies and to then explore multiple interpretations of the data. Decolonising research methodologies (Diaz Soto & Swadener, 2002; L. T. Smith, 1999) are a relatively new field. Early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand has been at the cutting edge of implementing a curriculum that honours indigeneity (Ritchie, 2003a, 2005). It is important that research continues to examine and illuminate ways in which this curriculum is being enacted.

Strategic themes and addressing gaps in knowledge

In addition to building upon current early childhood research and knowledges as outlined earlier, the current project sits alongside the Kōtahitanga research under way in the secondary sector, led by Professor Russell Bishop (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003). Both projects can be characterised as having a common strategic theme of addressing the historical legacy of colonisation, with its undercurrent of racism, which can be viewed as continuing to contribute to the current educational and other disparities. Well-intended government policies to increase the participation of Māori in early childhood education are unlikely to succeed until "quality, culturally validating early childhood services are locally available and affordable to these families" (Ritchie & Rau, 2007, p. 111). Moving beyond deficit, victim-blaming discourses enables the identification of strategies for addressing longstanding educational disparities which instead focus on the teachers' role within the specific educational setting (Bishop, Berryman, Tiakiwai, & Richardson, 2003). Research that identifies ways that educators within early childhood services (other than Kōhanga Reo) can strengthen their delivery of programmes towards meeting Māori families aspirations for support of their language and cultural practices can be viewed as a strategic step in reversing the ongoing educational disparities for Māori.

Substantive and robust findings

The collaborative nature of the research design and, in particular, the theorising of the research findings will deliver a high degree of credibility when the research is made available to practitioners in the field of early childhood care and education. The methodology employed enables triangulation of perspectives from three key domains: early childhood educators, tamariki, and whānau. The involvement of the educators in the development of the methodological tools and in the theorising of the data strengthens the practical application of this research, ensuring that is relevant and accessible to the field.

Ngā hua ritenga/Practice value

Central role of teacher and building research capability

The nature of this research is a collaborative and reciprocal process, honouring the role and experiences of educators. Educators have served as the central conduit in liaising with children and whānau in order to ensure that their interpretations are legitimate representations of the data being gathered (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Ongoing hui provided opportunities for co-theorising of the overall data that has been collected. Educators have been involved in deciding ways of disseminating findings to maximise their accessibility to the field.

Relevance to practitioners/transfer to learning environment

The recent publication of the work of the Early Childhood Learning and Exemplar Assessment Project, *Kei Tua o te Pae* (Ministry of Education, 2004), includes a strong focus on bicultural assessment, reflected in the booklet "Bicultural Assessment/He Aromatawai Ahurea Rua", which states that "all centres are encouraged to continue to build understanding and practice" (p. 6), with the aim that all "children actively participate, competently and confidently, in both the Māori world and the Pākehā world and are able to move comfortably between the two" (p. 7). It further states that educators should aim to ensure that "Māori and Pākehā viewpoints about reciprocal and responsive relationships with people, places, and things are evident" (p. 7). The examples of assessment in this booklet provide some aspirational examples of programmes that validate Māori values, as well as stories that highlight some non-Māori teachers' reflections about bicultural challenges. The current project, Te Puawaitanga, has built on such work and on the previous TLRI project, *Whakawhanaungatanga—Partnerships in Bicultural Development in Early Childhood Care and Education* (Ritchie & Rau, 2006), providing an in-depth contribution to the cumulative body of material that employs narrative models, and which speak to the needs of practitioners endeavouring to deliver quality early childhood programmes.

2. Research design and methodologies

The project was led by co-directors Dr Jenny Ritchie, Associate Professor Early Childhood Teacher Education, Unitec Institute of Technology, and Cheryl Rau, of the University of Waikato, Hamilton. Based on our previous experiences within the Whakawhanaungatanga project we were very mindful of our role as lead researchers in this project of the need to continue to foster a climate and conditions that encouraged the educator co-researchers to exercise their own independent expertise and knowledges but that also provided them with a responsive level of support. Central to maintaining this balance was to establish and maintain a climate of respect and availability, and a shared vision for the project. A key strategy here was the initial hui, attended by all partner researchers, kuia, kaumātua, and the Dunedin research facilitator. Scaffolding of their researcher capacity was integral from the outset, whereby, at this hui, we facilitated sessions sharing ideas around ethical considerations, the nature and philosophy of narrative methodology, and how this might be applied in terms of effective data collection strategies. Collaborative relationships fostered within the previous TLRI project were extended within the proposed research project, with for example, a Whakawhanaungatanga research colleague serving as a liaising researcher, facilitating the work of the Dunedin kindergarten co-researchers. Ongoing hui occurred with all colleagues discussing and sharing strategies for data collection and co-theorising this data.

Narrative research methodologies

The earlier Whakawhanaungatanga research (Ritchie & Rau, 2006) had highlighted the voices of educators, professional development providers, and teacher educators who shared and co-theorised their knowledges about ways of involving whānau Māori within childhood learning communities. The current project built upon this base, co-constructing with educators, tamariki, and whānau new narratives around culturally inclusive early childhood programmes. We have been enacting a model whereby educators are honoured as co-researchers of the world views of their participating tamariki/children and whānau/families, in an ongoing process of generating new narratives. For Indigenous people, languages represent the reservoir of their collective knowledges, founded in a sense of community and interdependence between people and nature (Gamlin, 2003). Oral traditions are an ongoing collective process of making sense (Newhouse, 2004), ensuring that key knowledges are retained, sustained, and evolved over the generations. Sharing narratives, storying our meanings, our histories, our values, our cultures generates and reinforces our connectedness. Narrative understandings of knowledge and context are linked to identity and values, providing stories to live by, and that are lived and shaped in places and

through relationships (Clandinin & Huber, 2002, p. 161). Wally Penitito has written that “full personhood is itself defined in part by one’s authority to tell one’s own story” (1996, p. 10).

Narrative is a current strategy within early years pedagogy and assessment (Carr, 2000a; Carr, Hatherly, Lee, & Ramsay, 2003; Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007; Ministry of Education, 2004; Rinaldi, 2006) and research (Clandinin, 2007; Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Clandinin et al., 2006; Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007). Teachers, children, and whānau in many centres have been experimenting with various ways of documenting their narratives. Educators in this view are thoughtful researchers whose observations are no longer about measuring children’s achievements and development against supposedly “universal” and “objective” expectations. Instead, the creation of these narrative explorations are “a process of co-construction embedded in concrete and local situations” (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999, p. 145). Narratives are a celebration of our humanity and collectivity, whereby shared meanings and understandings are negotiated and affirmed.

The research process has been characterised by strong, respectful, and supportive relationships between all co-researchers. The input of kuia, kaumātua, the research facilitator, and the educator co-researchers obtained through ongoing discussion was incorporated into the initial proposal and research design. At an initial collective hui, all the above researchers collaborated in sharing their experiences and preferred styles of narrative data gathering processes as well as workshopping of ethics protocols. The co-directors and research facilitator maintained ongoing communication with regional cluster groups and individual centres via email, website, phone, and visits. These visits were an opportunity to discuss the effectiveness of data gathering processes, for each centre’s data to be theorised, and also allowed data gathered from other centres to be shared and wider co-theorising to be undertaken. A final collective hui was an opportunity for all the co-researchers to regroup and present their experiences, as well as another opportunity for co-theorising of key findings across all partner researchers.

Research methods

An initial hui for educator co-researchers led by the liaison co-researchers, provided the opportunity for discussion and clarification regarding both research ethics and methodologies. Educators from each participating centre planned their research strategy and timeline. On their return to their centres, they identified potential children/tamariki/families/whānau who might be interested in becoming involved in the project. They were then invited to share their experiences over time, of their participation within the early childhood education setting, once initial ethical protocols were completed. Following discussion at that initial collective hui of possible approach questions for the first set of narrative interviews, summary notes were sent out to educator co-researchers which included ideas on interview approaches and questions.

Instead of approaching tamariki and whānau with the “bigger picture” research questions, the educator co-researchers needed to find ways of gently encouraging tamariki and whānau to open

up and share their stories. For example, the hui discussed how poring over a portfolio of stories and photos, with a digital audio-recorder running alongside, might be a perfect way of eliciting some rich background about what the child or adult was feeling, thinking, or imagining.

Some suggested open questions included:

- Remembering back to when you first came to the centre, what did you notice about the way we did things here? Were there any things Māori that you recall noticing?
- Can you tell me about how you felt when you first came here? How has that feeling of … changed over the time that you have been coming?
- What is one of your favourite memories of your time here? Can you tell me about a highlight from your child's experiences here?"

Another suggestion was for interviewers to focus on a particular recent experience such as a marae visit or hāngi.

Data collection was diverse, incorporating audiotaped and videotaped interviews and transcription, field notes, photographs, examples of children's art, and centre pedagogical documentation. Liaison researchers facilitated the data collection by educator co-researchers, in collaboration with tamariki/whānau. We (Jenny Ritchie and Cheryl Rau), the research co-directors, maintained ongoing research co-theorising conversations with co-researchers, some of which were tape-recorded as data. At a typical co-theorising hui, we and Lee Blackie, the research facilitator in Dunedin, would visit the teachers at the centre, talking with them about how things were going, listening and looking at data that had been gathered, collaboratively discussing the teachers' sense of what was emerging and what might be useful to reflect on further. Initially, the narratives generated were analysed at the individual centre level by the educator researchers, tamariki and whānau within each setting. Educators liaised with tamariki and whānau collaboratively, identifying what was salient for them within their personal narratives. As data became available, powerpoint presentations of some examples of data collected from across a range of centres, along with reflections and suggested directions for analysis and co-theorising, were discussed during co-theorising visits. Further collective co-theorising took place first at cluster hui and then at a final hui of the wider research collective.

We, the co-directors, oversaw the smooth functioning of the website forum, the data gathering analysis, the theorising, and finally the production and dissemination of the data sets. Their role was also to ensure that the methodological paradigm was sound and practical and within the constraints and objectives of the project as approved by the Teaching and Learning Research Initiative. Narrative inquiry is fluid and responsive (Craig & Huber, 2007), forming an entity of its own process within each particular study. "In fact, narrative inquiry cannot be reduced to a research design", yet is composed of "a number of 'tools' that researchers and participants use as they collaboratively make sense of their unfolding experiences" (Craig & Huber, 2007, p. 269). The research processes that emerged within the various teaching teams were consistent with the

collaborative research model described in depth by Bishop & Glynn (1999) and utilise a narrative approach to methodology and cultural analysis (Florio-Ruane, 2001).

Ethical considerations

Ethical considerations involved following protocols of ensuring that both tamariki and whānau were well informed about the research purpose and processes; taking care to ensure that permissions were granted for use of photographs; and checking as to whether participants were comfortable to have their names used or would prefer a pseudonym to be used. During the two-year period of the project, some educators and families moved on, and it was necessary to make allowances for these changes. There was awareness that a relational research ethics, particularly when working amongst domains of cultural difference, entails a disposition towards ethical considerations as constant, ongoing, and never taken for granted (Craig & Huber, 2007). Ethical questions are "ongoing, constant considerations" (Harrison, 2001, p. 228) requiring mindful attentiveness and respectful dialogue. The final draft was circulated to all educator co-researchers with the request that they carefully check that they and the families were comfortable with all the ways that their data had been represented, and to re-check consent for the use of real names. Changes were made in accordance with this feedback.

3. Findings

This chapter is framed around the study's three research questions:

- How can narrative methodologies enhance our reflective understandings as educators on a bicultural journey?
- How do the tamariki/children and whānau/families (Māori, Pākehā, and Tauiwi) experience and respond to the bicultural programmes within these early childhood settings?
- In what ways are Māori, Pākehā, and Tauiwi educators committed to a Tiriti-based curriculum paradigm, enacting ways of being that are enabling of cross cultural understandings embracing of tamariki/children and whānau/families of different ethnicities from their own?

Narrative methodologies enhancing understandings

This section outlines some of the ways in which this project has used collaborative narrative research processes. The narrative methodology strategies employed included the gathering of raw interim narrative texts, including interview transcripts, photographs, notes of reflective conversations, emailed reflections, and other sources, which were later shaped into sets of narrative explorations through ongoing collaborative co-theorising.

Shared commitment, responsibility, and collaboration

Previous research has identified the benefits of having a shared team commitment to Tiriti-based kaupapa (Ritchie, 2000, 2002, 2003b). Many of the educator co-researchers within this study had been encouraged to participate by their head teacher, and these head teachers were sensitive to their role in supporting a collective process for their team. One co-researcher, Marion Dekker, explained that:

> I have to say that I've probably coerced my team members into being part of this process and so like all of us we stepped onto the waka at different points and so as the team leader I felt responsible for ensuring that the team were comfortable in an area that they perhaps they were a little bit uncomfortable. So the process has been a really gentle one and yet I'm, as the team leader, feeling really delighted in the team's progress and their acceptance and now their understanding, or their new insight as to what their practice looks like and why they do things a certain way and why in the past we've talked about being a bicultural society and that we as teachers have a fundamental responsibility to delivering that understanding to our children and our families, but actually how do we do that and actually who are we and how do we fit in that and if your background has been only Pākehā, middle-class Pākehā, then how does that all kind of mesh?

Marion's comments, while demonstrating her successful steering of the "waka" during her team's research journey, also indicate her awareness of the socio-political-historical context for our work in early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand, in which early childhood educators have been progressive in acknowledging our colonial context and consequent responsibilities regarding Māori kaupapa within mainstream settings (Marshall, Coxon, Jenkins, & Jones, 2000; Helen May, 2001; Helen May, 2006; Meade, 1988; Ministry of Education, 1998; Ritchie, 2002). The following excerpts taken from Brooklands kindergarten indicate how some initial tensions within the team began to resolve over the period of time that the team collaborated on the research kaupapa. In an initial reflection, co-researcher Ramila Sadikeen articulated concerns that her colleagues had in terms of the extra work load that the commitment to the project would mean:

> Today we sat down to talk about the research project and how and what is expected of the team in terms of their contribution and how it fits with all things related to the curriculum and the long term goals of the centre. I found this discussion interesting and enlightening in terms of the research participants perspective. There was focus on the research questions and how the centre is implied to be the place where the research took place. The feeling I got from this discussion is "how come you chose to do this without consultation and consent from us (team)?" I probably pre-empted the feelings of extended work load and how it could impact the work life balance. I went on to tell them that I did not envisage it to have any impact on them at all.

Evidence of the research process having been effectively shared by the team appears in a later reflection made in February, 2007, halfway through the study, on the ritual that her kindergarten enacts to farewell children who are leaving to attend school, she wrote that:

> The team now thinks of this Tikanga that we follow as a ritual that is well and truly entrenched in the sum total of experiences and learning opportunities that we offer to our Tamariki and whānau. What was different from my perspective of leadership is that the team took the initiative to look at the amount of whānau that are new and also the amount of whānau that were leaving in terms of organising the date of this pōwhiri and poroporoaki and to have this ritual in the middle of the term rather than the end of the term as we have done in the past year. For the first time I felt that I did not initiate the organisation of this tikanga and that I made decisions jointly with my team as they initiated the discussion. Decision was made jointly and thereby giving ownership to the whole experience to all involved (evidence of shared leadership).
>
> - The team is showing and taking note of the effective ways of ensuring how this ritual happens.
> - They are looking at trends and thinking of the opportunities to maximize the meaningful links to the children's learning.
> - Kaiako Anne-Marie briefed the new whānau about their part in the Tikanga and the whānau were relaxed and reflected what to expect and able to take part in the ritual easily.
> - Taking on leading the tamariki to say karakia before kai and ensuring that the teachers are giving clear instructions to tamariki about how much kai to take in consideration to those manuhiri who are in our presence was important. The

> shared leadership is evident in the way that as I stepped back, kaiako Jo stepped into this role for the children.

At the final collective hui, as the teaching teams shared stories of their research journeys, a theme emerged across the centres, of the research experience having strengthened their sense of being a team with a shared understanding. Their collaborative journey had begun at the outset of their involvement in the study, when the various teams sat down to talk about their new commitment to being part of the research, what this would mean for them, and how it might fit within their busy routines. Several of the teams used this as an opportunity to review what they were already doing in terms of bicultural implementation.

The team at Hawera outlined their process in a September 2006 progress report. Their first step had been "Informing Our Community" for which they had prepared a two-part newsletter for their kindergarten whānau which aimed to provide background about the research project, Te Puawaitanga, explaining who was involved and the aims and aspirations of the co-directors. The newsletter also explained how the teachers would participate and contribute to this research project, including the opportunity offered to two or three whānau to also be participants.

Their second step, "Informing Our Colleagues", had included a presentation to the Kindergarten Association staff hui, at which they shared with teaching colleagues information about their involvement in Te Puawaitanga: how they came to be participants; who else was involved; their planning; the process for contributing through data collection and narratives; and an offer to provide their colleagues with updates on their progress.

The next stage, which they labelled, "Working with the Whānau", included invitations to whānau to be involved which contained information about the project and how whānau could contribute, as well as explaining how they, the teachers, would "use" their contributions in term of sharing with the Te Puawaitanga whānau whānui. The team emphasised that this required "building respectful relationships"; sharing with them and their child profile stories, encouraging them to contribute their stories through "Parent/whānau voice"; and ongoing "listening, responding, and sharing". The team were instinctively enacting their awareness that "Relationship is the heart of living alongside in narrative inquiry—indeed, relationships form the nexus of this kind of inquiry space" (Pinnegar, 2007, p. 249), and that "conversation is primarily an act of listening (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007, p. 170).

The team explained their understanding of their role and process as collaborative narrative researchers as requiring a strong focus on "Team Hui Time", to:

- discuss our observations of the children, their whānau and their engagement with the programme and life of the kindergarten
- check on the progress of our plan including reviewing of strategies and adjusting timeframes and approaches
- discuss our personal perspectives
- share anecdotal data gathered from informal conversations with the whānau
- record discussion from our hui.

Hawera later reflected on their first steps within this study:

> In the beginning we were…
>
> - developing policy and procedures around the teaching team's commitment to te reo me ōna tikanga Māori. We were beginning to explore and question 'Is what we say we do (in policy and procedures) actually happening in practice and having positive outcomes for children, whānau and teachers here?'
> - intent on reflecting *Te Whāriki*—its principles and strands. We desired that the children and whānau felt a strong sense of well-being and belonging here though clearly not in isolation of the strands Communication, Contribution and Exploration
> - implementing Desirable Objectives and Practices, as a service requirement, and included developing and sustaining practices for on-going centre self-review
> - continuing to develop as a team, which included bedding down our personal and team philosophies, our individual and team practices. We were also responding to internal and external changes occurring in the association and in our personal and professional lives.

At the end of the project, the Hawera Kindergarten team reflected on their experiences of "becoming researchers":

> What did becoming researchers mean for us?
>
> - Can we do this? We asked ourselves questions such as "Would this mahi required of us as participants 'fit' within an already busy work programme?", "Did we have anything to contribute?", "Are we researchers?" Our first hui with all the participants answered our questions, and gave us the motivation to find our own answers!
> - Finding out more about ourselves, the impact of our practices and programme, on children and whānau. The opportunity to "face ourselves in the mirror" had to be taken. We deserved to be reaffirmed about what we did well and to avail ourselves of experiences and people that would gives us the "positives" about aspects in our programme that had room for change and /or improvement.
> - Commitment to doing this together, drawing on what we already know and being open to what we are yet to learn!! It was a long term project that involved, observations, documentation, hui, kōrero, implementation—above and beyond the daily programme. The team still thought it would be worth being participants!
> - Exploring the processes and tools for gathering data, and presenting to others. We knew we would draw on tools for assessment, planning and evaluation that we currently used and were certain we would discover whether those tools—as well as other processes suggested trough the project—would truly capture the tamaiti and whānau voices. What would the outcomes reveal? We also knew that "sharing" with our colleagues (progress updates, stories, observations, etc) would be great learning and experience for the three of us!

Pat Leyland from Belmont–Te Kupenga summed up the importance of shared commitment within the teams at the final co-theorising hui:

> You can't do it by yourself in a centre, you actually have to have everyone else in the team on board. And I think that's the strongest thing that has been here today, the unity of the teams, and that's whanaungatanga.

Reviewing and reflecting

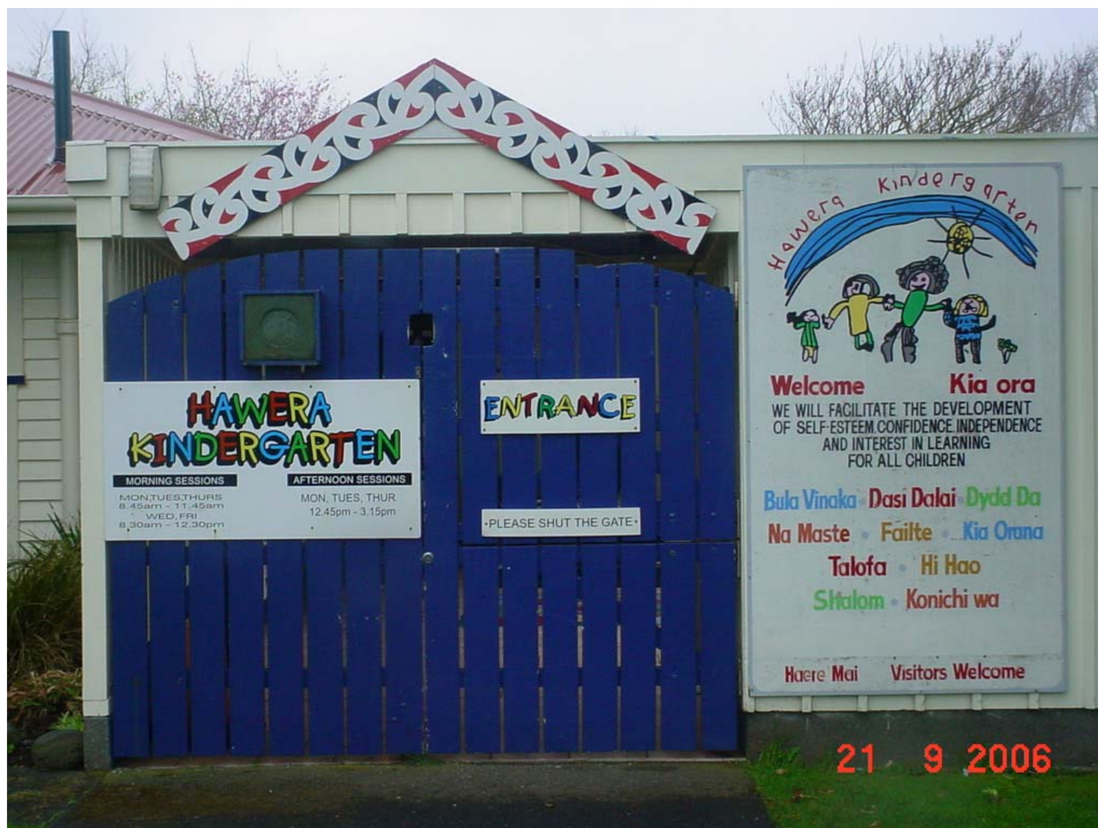
Educator teams began their involvement in the study with a focused self-review (Bevan-Brown, 2003; Ministry of Education, 2006), calling themselves to account in terms of their professional responsibilities and adherence to specific Ministry of Education expectations in relation to Tiriti-based practice. Part of the review process undertaken by various teams at the outset of their participation in this study included consideration of their kindergarten environment.

During this process, the Hawera team took a critical look at the physical layout, visuals, and presentations, with particular consideration given towards the impressions that these would have on visiting whānau (Figure 1).

Figure 1 **Around the kindergarten**

They noted in particular their welcoming entrance way, with the signage "Naumai, haere mai" (Figure 2).

Figure 2 **Entrance way to Hawera Kindergarten**



Visual narrative methodology

Photos in themselves are a rich source of data. Stefinee Pinnegar writes of the power of visual narratives to elucidate dimensions of place and representations of space:

> Think of the living quality not then just of this single photo and its multiple tellings and retellings, but think of the photos in relation to others taken and untaken, told and untold, present and absent. Thus, coming to understand making meaning in a visual narrative inquiry captures the complexity of making meaning in living alongside and supporting the living and meaning making of others. (Pinnegar, 2007, p. 248)

Hawera's first progress report also noted their inclusive focus on the "Natural Environment" within their kindergarten surrounds (Figure 3).

Figure 3 **Around the Hawera Kindergarten. To look at, handle, explore, care for—from our world around us**

With regard to reviewing their current practices, the team posed for themselves the following reflective questions:

- What works well for us already in terms of developing relationships with tamariki and their whānau?
- What practices have we developed to support this?
- What practices could we develop to further support?

Papamoa Kindergarten undertook a similar review as they began their participation in the project. Their first project progress report also included a number of photographs of their kindergarten environment (Figure 4).

Figure 4 **Images from Papamoa Kindergarten**

These visual images serve as a source of shared focus, enabling the team to revisit their everyday lived experience from a slightly objective stance. "Experience is the organic intertwining of living human beings and their natural and built environment" (Bach, 2007, p. 283). These images, "positioned within the process" of our relational narrative enquiry, "become more than photographs" reflecting the "intentionality, the negotiated, and the recursive nature" (Bach, 2007, p. 283) of the effect of the visual in contributing a "three dimensional narrative inquiry space" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 50, as cited in Bach, 2007, p. 283) resonant of "networks of cultural meanings" (Walker, 2005, p. 24, as cited in Bach, 2007). In reflecting on their current bicultural practices, the Papamoa team listed some of these as follows:

Bicultural practices in action (July, 2006)

- Shared kai
- Washing hands before food
- No sitting on tables
- Tuakana/teina with school children coming over
- Karakia before food
- Te reo/waiata/legends/signs in English and Māori
- Greetings
- Kindergarten logo is based on the local story of the three whales.

Educator co-researchers thus grounded their entry into the formal research process in a reflective review of their current philosophy and enactment around honouring Māori knowledges and values within their everyday practice.

Choosing families

One of the first decisions for the educator co-researcher teams was to decide upon which families they might invite to participate in terms of gathering narrative data. The teachers carefully chose a range of families, including Māori, Pākehā, and Tauiwi families such as recent immigrants. They often identified families with whom they already had a longstanding relationship:

> One family, we interviewed the Mum and the Dad, because they'd already had two children through the kindergarten, they had their third one here and the fourth one was going to be with us not too far away. So I felt that they knew us really well and I was interested in why they came to our kindergarten and why do they keep coming back. And the things that they shared validated what we gave to them and that was really important. (Pat, Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten)

> The whānau we asked to be involved in the research were ones we had very good relationships with. Only one family had had a previous sibling with us. All of the whānau involved had a good awareness of and a genuine respect for the programme we run. Sheryl (Spiro's Mum) could see the growth in our practice from when her older child was with us about three years previously. (Richard Hudson Kindergarten)

> We chose to use families that we had a strong relationship with, ones that we had had discussions with before and families that had a history with us. We also thought it was

> important to include our kindergarten whānau, Nana Sue and Lynette as they had continued to stay and help out. With this form of questioning we wanted to identify them as the taonga that they are and show the manaakitanga that exists in the kindergarten. (Carolyn, Papamoa Kindergarten)

The teachers shared the difficulty they had experienced in narrowing down their choice of focus families, as they would have enjoyed working closely with more than three families, but realised that time constraints made this unworkable:

> It's like who do you ask because you really want to put it up on the noticeboard and go "Oh come and you know, come and talk…" and you know you'd like everybody too but the reality of that and the busy-ness of our work is too big, so we had to limit it and so we chose to ask a family that had immigrated from England about five years ago, so new to New Zealand, and we were thinking that it could be interesting to hear how they found living in New Zealand and a bicultural society, and so we chose them for those reasons. We chose a Pākehā family and a Māori family. (Marion, Maungatapu)

Interviewing

Most of the educators transcribed their own interviews, though some were also sent through to the co-directors for transcribing. As they worked through their data, this was co-theorised with colleagues the team, with the families, and also within the wider research whānau. Discussion arose around strategies for interviewing children, as some of the teachers had found this to be challenging in terms of their ability to draw out extended dialogue, focusing on the research kaupapa. When interviewing young children, previous research has suggested that group interviews (pairs or more of children) are more likely to allow children the freedom and safety to choose whether and how to answer (Carr, 2000a; Graue & Walsh, 1995).As Vicki Stuart, from Morrinsville Early Learning Centre wrote, "I must say that I am finding it hard to get tamariki to share their thoughts with me as when you talk to them they often don't go quite the way you want them to. The conversations seem to be going other ways at the moment".

Here is an excerpt from Carolyn O'Connor (Papamoa Kindergarten) from her first round of data collection, of a conversation with a small group of children. In this first stage of the research process, her aim had been "to ascertain what the children understood as Māori, the things we do everyday waiata and karakia, whether children recognised things as Māori".

Teacher:	Do you know any Māori songs?
Child:	No.
Teacher:	Do you know the haka?
Child:	Yes.
Teacher:	Is that a Māori dance?
Child:	No you go (pokes his tongue and rolls his eyes)
Teacher:	Why do you do that with your tongue?
Child:	Because I saw a picture.
Teacher:	Do you know any Māori songs? We sing some in the morning?
Child:	Morena

Teacher:	Is that a Māori word?
Child:	No
Child:	Morena kaiako.
Teacher:	What does that mean?
Child:	To the teachers.

Carolyn commented that "One of the things I found hard was interviewing children—it was kind of a struggle sometimes to get that understanding". In adopting this adult-led style of interviewing process, the teachers felt a sense of inherent contradiction between their role as early childhood educators with our disposition of responding to children's interests rather than formally steering conversations derived from adult agendas. As Graue and Hawkins (2005, p. 51) have pointed out in relation to their research with child participants, "interview responses are not in and of themselves indicators of any particular knowledge on the part of participants", since they are inevitably "contingent on our invitations". One interpretation is that the teachers, in assuming the role of "researcher" may have felt and appeared stilted in their conversations, to a certain extent unintentionally stifling the natural flow, and impeding their conversational process in terms of the vital role of being a listener (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007). Teachers as researchers "authored our interactions with particular knowledge, purposes, and intentions" (Graue & Hawkins, 2005, p. 53), the children attempting to supply the "right answers" to satisfy their interpretation of the adult's agenda. In interpreting their role as researchers as one of asking children to respond to their questions, the teachers were somehow missing opportunities to elicit the children's narratives as narrators of their own lived experiences (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003). As Hedy Bach (2007, p. 292) has noted, "Listening is hard work. Being available, being 'present', having an open heart to participants matters". There is a very pronounced difference "between an obligatory chronicle and an animated story of the day's events" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p. 274). Power effects within the relationship between adult and child (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl,2007; Limerick, Burgess-Limerick, & Grace, 1996; Scheurich, 1995) may subvert the good intentions of the interviewer, through inadvertent disempowerment of the interviewee.

MacNaughton, Smith, and Lawrence (2003) have written about strategies that enable researchers to listen carefully to children, linking these to effective pedagogical practice. They note that it is challenging for educators to address entrenched imbalances whereby both adults and children are accustomed to children being expected to listen to adults a great deal of the time. A key strategy is for educators to "find time to listen to the children, so that the children see that staff are interested in their perspectives and feel that they can direct the conversation", allow for respectful pauses and silences in which children feel that they have the space to gather their thoughts, and respond carefully in ways that affirm children's offerings (MacNaughton, Smith, & Lawrence, 2003, p. 18). They also suggest that adults offer children different media for sharing their understandings, such as images, voice and text. Research facilitators in the current study suggested that educators use photos of the children engaged in activities as a focus for conversations that might draw out children's views of what this engagement had meant for them.

As a result of their dissatisfaction with the didactic nature of some of their initial attempts at gathering data from children, we, the co-directors, discussed with the teachers various alternative approaches, also sharing written material that might provide further insight (Brooker, 2001). Teachers experimented with a range of different strategies, such as recording discussions after reading the legend of Maui and Ranginui, interviewing children in pairs or small groups, and focusing on children's relationships with persona dolls (MacNaughton, Smith, & Lawrence, 2003).

A significant finding from this study is the discovery by Carolyn at Papamoa Kindergarten, that she gained much richer data on her second round of interviews, when parents and children with both present. Here is an excerpt from a transcript from one of these shared interviews, when Carolyn talks with both Kathryn, and Sky, Kathryn's daughter:

Carolyn:	What bicultural experiences do you notice your child has at kindergarten?
Kathryn:	I know they have been studying Maui and the sun, just basic stuff like counting .That s about it.
Carolyn:	What bicultural experiences has your child had at home that we may be able to use to find out how they feel about biculturalism in the centre?
Kathryn:	We used to spend time at the marae—my partner's marae—but not since we have been over here. We haven't been back there for a long time now.
Carolyn:	You have an extended whānau living at home. Do you speak te reo at home?
Kathryn:	A little bit, not as much as I would like to. Sky was saying to me "I know the Māori word for hat. It's Potae"
Carolyn:	Where would she have got that from?
Kathryn:	I don't know.
(Sky comes over)	
Carolyn (to Sky):	Can you tell me any Māori words that you know?
(Sky cuddles Mum)	
Kathryn to Sky:	What is the Māori word for hat?
Sky:	Potae.
Carolyn:	Where did you learn that Māori word?
Sky:	From myself
Carolyn:	Do you know any other Māori words?
Kathryn:	What's this thing here?
(Kathryn tickles Sky's tummy)	
Sky:	Puku! (she laughs)
Carolyn:	Do you know any Māori songs? Does Mum sing to you?
Sky:	Yes. Mummy knows it.
Carolyn:	What parts do you know?
Kathryn:	What words has it got in it ? (Kathryn points to parts)
Sky:	Puku, head, shoulders.(Then Kathryn and Sky sing the song together. Beautiful to listen to says Carolyn).

Carolyn reported that from this new approach of sharing the discussion with children and their parents she gained much more insight into the context of her children and their families, demonstrating the centrality of context to narrative inquiry (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000):

> I went into the second set of data gathering with a sense of frustration so this time I interviewed the children and the parents together. The conversation was so much more valuable I found, and I found out a lot of things, like one family speak a lot of Māori together in the home. We've got a lot of families that don't go to their marae because it's quite far away. I thought that was kind of sad for those families because they were more isolated I guess.
>
> I had much more fun and got more valuable information from this set of interviews as I saw the value of context being important. The parents being with the children during interviews added a whole new dimension to questioning and understanding how children had experienced and consolidated learning (ako). It was beautiful also seeing that family sharing of experiences, parents enjoyed it too, children revisiting and for me seeing that cultural connection.

Later, Carolyn from Papamoa Kindergarten reflected on her overall interview process:

> This indeed has been a significant learning curve as in how to obtain information by interviewing. How do you find out how children respond to the bicultural programme by interviewing and questioning them? After a few attempts and getting used to working the dictaphone (which was a necessity in the interview process) I felt that to develop clearer understandings of a child you needed to know the context in which they were talking. This was okay with interviews that were about experiences at kindergarten, but what knowledge and understanding did children bring from home or transfer between home and kindergarten? It was about seeing a child's perspective of their life. Therefore by interviewing both child and parent it gave a richer perspective and depth of understanding of their world. Questioning became more relevant to their experiences and knowledge.

In her quest for rich sources of data and research insight, Carolyn went on to experiment with video interviewing, which proved to be a useful process of making visible the taken-for-granted.

> Our next step was using the video once again how to capture the essence of children's perceptions without running the video for the whole session. We had a wonderful parent interview that came out of asking for permission to film her child, she said "What about me? I have things to say!!!!" I feel that by using the narrative form in the last set was much more useful and again contextual.

At the end of the study, Carolyn reflected that, "Revisiting the videos we took of the children, we saw once again the integration throughout the programme. Children have these experiences every day". This richness is in accordance with the work of Lourdes Diaz Soto (2005, p. 10), who has written that "Narrative inquiry offers a contextualized experience developed as a means of understanding events and processes across linguistic, cultural, visual, historical, and social boundaries". Uncovering contextual factors such as temporal, spatial, and personal dynamics provides the background necessary for making sense of people's narratives and motivations (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Carolyn has also responded to the "multiple story lines shaping

participants' lives" (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 25), gaining new insights into the discontinuities that surround families aspirations to provide Māori identities for their children. Narrative data gathered in our current study involved more than interviews. Other sources of data including field notes, photographs, and centre pedagogical documentation provided a rich landscape. As Clandinin and Connelly note (2000, p. 79), the overall narrative portrait is generated from the composition of documented "actions, doings, and happenings, all of which are narrative expressions".

Whānau involvement in co-theorising

For many of the co-researcher educator teams, the shared storying, or co-theorising, progressed to include whānau in the discussions pertaining to the research findings and process. Since the "meaning of the narratives comes from analyses or interpretations of the conversations" (Hollingsworth & Dybdahl, 2007, p. 153) in which the most important focus for the researcher should be to engage in the act of "listening well" (Chase, 2003 as cited in Bach, 2007, p. 292), this input from whānau provided invaluable understandings for the project. Marion Dekker's team at Maungatapu Kindergarten found that responding to a research-generated discussion with parents led them to clarify and deepen shared understandings of their bicultural commitment, and further, to identify a focus for enactment of this:

> So we set up the process that we'd been advised to, as competent women here, and then we embarked on some interviews and I guess the thing about the interviews were that in those group discussions it would spark a response from our teaching team and it was a bouncing of ideas really and so they were really, really great, and we got some good sort of responses. One family that have recently immigrated, we spoke with the mother and it was interesting because she absolutely, was eager to embrace bicultural thinking. She just had a really open, warm heart to people, and yet actually underpinning some of her thinking was also very strongly a multicultural thinking, and so we found that reasonably interesting to try and unpack a bit, that actually her background was very much influenced by a range of different multicultural experiences through her childhood as we found out through her stories. And so although she wanted to embrace biculturalism, and she was really excited about what she was seeing in the kindergarten, she still had a really strong feeling and value that actually we as people live in a very multicultural world and so how does that fit? So that was good for us to be able to unpack that a little bit more and talk about first and foremost that living here in Aotearoa is about living in a bicultural world. We were able to really sort of talk through some of that with her and again that was really good for the rest of the team because it helped us to then focus on what we were delivering in our programme. It was about being able to focus on what it is that we were wanting to really see being represented and really see strongly there, which brought us to wanting to have more emphasis in the environment. So we went on a journey of creating a wharenui in the kindergarten and with the support of one of our other parents, Josie, we went on this journey . . .

At the final co-theorising hui, Marion had shared her team's process with the other project co-researchers, reflecting on how their curiosity as to what constituted "Māori" aspects within their programme had been stimulated, to the point that they sought clarification from whānau:

> So I guess, you know from the outset, as a team we've had lots of discussions about that and we've been really fortunate to have a number of different whānau come in and just kind of talk along side us and help the team to identify with some of the things that we do that are Māori.

The following exchange is an example of the depth of this collaborative dialogue as the teacher (T) and Pākehā mother (M) discuss their understandings around the bicultural nature of the programme at Maungatapu Kindergarten, beginning by reflecting on how their personal perspectives have evolved over time:

> M: When we were growing up we … were all friends we didn't have any issues so how come today we do? I thought it worked back then. There must have been a respect for each other but lack of understanding do you think?
>
> T: I think you might have hit the nail on the head there. Did we actually acknowledge there was two cultures there?
>
> M: Right. Not at all and we didn't, did we? All of us just conformed to it.
>
> T: "Conform"—that's a really interesting word that you use, because it was about conforming really, wasn't it? And so whose culture were we conforming to?"
>
> M: English of course.
>
> T: So it's interesting to think about actually what is it about culture that living in New Zealand in a bicultural environment that you are going to feel comfortable exposing your children to, be it through this environment and ongoing?
>
> M: Obviously there is a blend here already and it's been enhanced. You're doing a good job, girls. Do you think the feelings thing of being happy and warm comes from the Māori culture?
>
> T: Being happy and warm?
>
> M: The feeling here of that warmth and that acceptance of people, you know how some people can accept whoever, whatever and love? Now not everybody has that skill to do that. Now do you think that is from the blending of biculturalism or is that you guys' personality?"
>
> T: I would say it's a combination but I think it is enhanced when one can acknowledge that they are dealing with two cultures and so there is difference and an acknowledgement of that and then some things are valued at different points. I think we try really hard to emphasise and value relationships so it might appear that we are saying "Oh the coffee's hot! Come and have a coffee", but actually in a Māori sense that is very much about making sure that when people come into our place they feel at home . . .
>
> M: Exactly so by incorporating those two models . . . And I was wondering whether that feeling is because of that?
>
> T: I think it's an ongoing awareness isn't it? We are all teachers that have been brought up in a Pākehā society so it's a learning curve for us. . .
>
> M: For everybody.
>
> T: Yeah, everybody. Everybody within the environment. The more you learn, the more comfortable you feel.
>
> M: Oh, absolutely because the fear is taken away.

T: Yeah, and it's also permission to speak the language and to be adapting some aspects of their culture in this environment. You don't feel like you are overstepping the mark or being fake about it or it's tokenism. I don't want to seem like I am trying to be in their culture I don't want it to seem like it's a token gesture.

M: You couldn't always feel like you could do that because they might look at you like. . .

T: You didn't want to offend anyone.

M: Whereas now you can do that and no-one feels. . .

T: The cultures have blended more. I feel that's a part of my culture now and who I am, I am a New Zealander, you are immersed in it and it comes more naturally now.

M: Yes I would agree with that.

T: It's really neat work you are doing with your boys and that you are allowing them to be exposed to biculturalism in a really positive way and I guess the flip side of that is for parents I think it's really useful to acknowledge that there is difference. We blend it together but we don't all actually want to be in the same melting pot. It's okay to be different and that's what's so unique about New Zealand so it's wonderful that we have an acceptance and a level of understanding and that we can live in harmony but actually it is the partnership of two cultures working beside each other and occasionally we cross but we don't have to cross.

M: But we have to understand and respect each other.

T: Sometimes it's about acknowledging that to the children and it feels a little bit awkward like you are making a point but otherwise it's just assimilated in them. You want them to be able identify difference. . . but at the same time you still need to be treated equally. I think the biggest thing is there is difference and that needs to be embraced.

M: I agree.

Marion also valued the input from children to generating understandings of their experiences:

> I mean I know that I really relied on Māori children to help support that process, so really some wonderful examples of scaffolding learning, peer-to-peer stuff and child teacher and that's exciting for those opportunities to happen and to see those children [demonstrating their knowledge].

At the final co-theorising hui, Adele Ellwood from Richard Hudson Kindergarten talked about how the children were indicators of the effectiveness of the project, at times challenging the teachers to further research.

> Some of those children that we interviewed actually have come back to us and asked us, "So what's the Māori word for this?" and we don't know, so we want to check it out and ask others who have got knowledge.

Narrative research involves "Learning to live, tell, relive, and retell stories of relational knowing as narrative inquirers, that is stories in which our ideas are not owned but shared, reshaped,

recomposed and re known through relationship and conversation" (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 30). Other stories of relational knowing enhanced through co-theorising with whānau were shared throughout our study, such as this from the team at Richard Hudson Kindergarten:

> Narrative gathering happened spontaneously. We were buzzing after the initial hui in Kirikiriroa in April 2006. We began by thinking about things that had happened recently with a bicultural focus … this led to beginning with Spiro's Pounamu narrative. It was about what we (Spiro included) do anyway (wearing pounamu) and how we responded to Spiro's observation of the different shapes of the pounamu. It was a beautiful progression of knowledge and understanding. Sheryl, his Mum, gave deep and honest feelings and words to describe her life and her hopes for her children.

Research facilitation and co-theorising

Educator co-researchers valued the support of research facilitation from the co-directors and, in the case of the Richard Hudson Kindergarten team, the research facilitator Lee Blackie. Visits from the co-directors and facilitator were an opportunity for each team to discuss where they were at with their own research process, for sharing of data from that centre, and also from other centres, and for co-theorising of this data. As data was received, the co-directors and research facilitator responded with feedback intended to stimulate deepening of the narrative understandings being generated. In response to Richard Hudson Kindergarten's initial narrative of Spiro's Pounamu Story, April 2006 (see Appendix A),[1] Lee Blackie provided details of her involvement with the ongoing storying:

> 8th Mei: Met Spiro who had shown some interest in poenemu[2]. He was wearing his piece and I showed him the hei tiki I was wearing. Adele got her books out that she was going to use to extend their initial kōrero—it is at the provocation stage. We looked at the images and compared, he told me his Dad gave him his. I told him I'd bring back an uncut piece I had at home and that he could look after it for me. He nodded and said "Okay". I said "Ka kite", he replied "Bye!"
>
> Mei 22nd: As promised I returned to the kindergarten bearing my toaka of uncut poenemu, Spiro was creating a butterfly that he had just learned how to triple weave, he contemplated giving it to me then decided to keep it for kindergarten and could make me one tomorrow, I was happy he made that decision after all the hard work. I showed him my piece of rock and told him that this is what it looks like before it is cut, and that when you wet it and rub it you can see its green, he compared this to the piece around his neck and commented that his piece was darker, I explained that this was called inanga and is a lighter green, he asked where my piece was when I told him that my pieces are made from the lighter coloured stone. I gave him the piece to handle which he commented was cold compared to the piece around his neck, his Mum was present today, he took the piece over to her and demonstrated

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[1] The narrative data contributed by Richard Hudson Kindergarten has been included as an example in Appendix A.

[2] Lee is using the southern dialect, as advised by Huata Holmes, the project kaumātua.

what I had done, he licked his fingers and rubbed the stone to show her that it is green and that it looks just like a rock as a disguise.

I introduced myself to his Mum and explained that I had travelled to the North Island with Grace and Adele and am supporting the research.

Meanwhile, research co-director Jenny also provided feedback on the ongoing narrative process at Richard Hudson Kindergarten:

Spiro's Pounamu Story 11 April
This narrative is Adele's story of an encounter of sharing around the collective experience of wearing taonga pounamu. The conversation touches on how the taonga are warmed in contact with bodies. There is a comparison of the shapes of the taonga. These interactions seem to have focussed on the sensory aspects of shape and temperature, superficially, but underlying this is a sense of warmth, bonding, common experience, connection. Am I right in sensing this Adele? Further conversations might extend into the historical/cultural contexts and meanings of the taonga. Who gave them to us and why do we wear them, why are they of personal/cultural significance. Do we have similar stories about the sources and meanings of our taonga? I know that when I shopped for pounamu in that lovely shop in Dunedin where the artist engraves the taonga, there were so many different meanings to the shapes, it took me ages to choose the two taonga that I eventually purchased for my two older boys!

Revisit of the Pounamu Story
8 May. Lovely to see the follow up of interest in the pounamu, extending understandings with books, and with Lee's visit wearing her own wonderful taonga. Nice photos—it would have been interesting to have recorded some more of the children's kōrero. Were you also reading out any of the kōrero within the books, or just taking in the pictures?.

Second Revisit of Pounamu story 23 May
Again more follow up with different pounamu to extend the experiences and understandings. Lovely to hear Spiro's excited responses. Some deeper historical/geographical connections being offered with the book showing sources of pounamu. Leadership and confidence from Spiro in demonstrating the torch effects on pounamu to other children. What was he telling them? Maybe you could show him a sequence of the photos that have been taken over the course of these narratives, and ask him to remember and reflect on what he was thinking/experiencing/learning? This could be recorded either by written notes or a Dictaphone. Lovely to see Sheryl, the Mum, involved and her resultant sharing about a whānau pounamu—the respectful interest in pounamu shown within the centre is enabling her to share personal meaningful connections.

Another example of narrative feedback follows, in response to data regarding a mother, Kelly, from Richard Hudson Kindergarten:

21 May
Kelly, a mother, is positive about the sense of respect for reo and tikanga that emanates from the kindergarten programme, affirming of the efforts being made. Interesting exchange as to whether Kelly would feel comfortable to say if she didn't think that the kindergarten was doing enough? Makes me wonder about the underlying power dynamics, and remember when I was a teacher that many parents were very shy, perceiving us, the teachers, as

"experts"—way too respectful to ever speak out in criticism of our professional endeavours! How can we find ways to can create openings where mothers such as Kelly can genuinely dialogue with us about their aspirations, their concerns, to generate future possibilities in which they have been part of the curriculum development process?

25 May
Warren is affirming also of the reo and tikanga exhibited in the kindergarten, acknowledging that as one of the generation who missed out on learning his language, he is now being facilitated to learn through his daughter's sharing. I wonder if this generates in Warren a mix of sad and proud feelings?

Lee B
Thanks for your supportive presence and contributions Lee. Maybe all of you could have a discussion now about where you are at, and where you can take the research further in terms of co-theorising with the tamariki, whānau about the deeper meaning sand what is important to them from these narratives? Lots of possibilities and potentials, and opportunities. The reading from MacNaughton might provoke some reflection also?

In responding to Spiro's interest in taonga pounamu, Adele, Lee and Jenny's own stories of taonga resonated as a common theme, or "narrative interlapping" (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 32):

> As one story resonates with another in the telling, new plotlines become visible or old plotlines are seen in new ways … narrative overlappings are also a way to understand the living of stories. We cannot understand a moment where a teacher researcher's and child's story to live by bump up against each other without trying to understand how this moment of bumping reverberates through the stories of each person. In the living, our stories to live by are side by side … and, as the moment of experiencing unfolds, each story shapes the other in ways that we cannot predict or fully understand in the moment. (Huber & Clandinin, 2004, p. 194–5, as cited in Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 32)

An example of data being circulated, and co-theorised is seen in the following excerpts from a powerpoint presentation shared mid-way in the research process, where co-director Jenny shared with the cluster of Tauranga kindergartens an overview of data contributed to the project at that point, including the following from the Richard Hudson Kindergarten team, which she responded to with some reflections for discussion purposes:

> Adele: When I read the bit about Kate wanting Izaak to learn as much about his culture as possible, I asked him about things Māori that he knew—suggesting waiata (and listing some we sing), and kupu such as the counting that we'd just done. Then Izaak said "what about haka?"—we had just watched the haka from the All Blacks vs England game this morning that Susan had showed us at mat time. I told Izaak that we are planning to learn a haka. And it happened! The kaiako (who happens to be my tane) came today and took a short introductory session of haka. It was great that the children were already familiar with actions and kupu such as takahia, "hi", and "hope". Izaak was enthusiastic and joined in. He was able to copy the movements that Matua Paul did. When I asked him afterwards about the haka session he said it was "good". (Teacher: Adele from Richard Hudson Kindergarten).

What's happening here?

- teacher responding to Mum (Kate's) expression of wanting things Māori for Izaak
- teachers utilising kapa haka at mat-time (all-blacks)
- teachers instigating kapa haka session This says so much to me about teacher responsiveness and commitment. (Jenny)

The sharing of narratives from whānau in the South Island who were struggling to maintain continuity with Māori histories and identities had resonance for the teachers in Tauranga, where some of the whānau Māori were experiencing some dislocation from their tribal connectedness.

Academic readings were periodically shared with the research whānau, in response to issues that had arisen methodologically, or to provide ongoing impetus theorising. Dialogue theorising these materials was carried on both during face-to-face hui and through electronic media. Ramila emailed her thoughts as she reflected on a chapter, "Seeking the 'Otherwise': Re-meeting relations of 'race' in early childhood classroom histories", from Glenda MacNaughton's (2005) book, *Doing Foucault in early childhood studies: Applying poststructural ideas* (pp. 146–187):

> Over the years of working with a variety of Pākehā teachers and holding on to the leadership of managing a team to uphold sensitivity towards the Māori parents' aspirations for their children and engaging in a dialogue where there are opportunities for whānau Māori to stand beside other parents to claim their position of voice to enable them to have the opportunity to have the power in the significant factors of the curriculum and DOPs has been of great interest to me. In my time of working for the past 25 years of teaching I have watched and worked hard to create a platform that gives all parents the opportunity to work on the aspirations for their children and have felt saddened by the disempowerment that some parents have felt because there has been an absence of a cultural context that enables the children and whānau to make links to the issues and factors that gives them the sense of who they are. .
>
> All has not been lost in the process. Reading the article sent to us, "Seeking the 'otherwise'" (MacNaughton, 2005, pp. 146–187), it makes it clearer than ever why I have felt so strongly about being the kind of teacher I am and for working toward a greater understanding of Kaupapa Māori in the centre and to aspire to work on the principles of *Te Whāriki* in terms of kōtahitanga and whakamana in that order for several years. Working with Pākehā teachers and being in the leadership has had its challenges for me. I have never given in on the principles of who I am and I have never given in on the principles of *Te Whāriki* in terms of establishing professional forums to work with Pākehā teachers who need a lot of work in terms of understanding the otherness of themselves and understanding the elements of working with race, culture and power issues.
>
> I was excited to read the Foucauldian genealogy of 'race' in early childhood as a critique of early childhood norms about how to be and how to act in an early childhood classroom. I believe the questions that follow on are so true to my thinking and it has very much reflected in searching for the satisfying ways of teaching in the Pākehā context and with Pākehā teachers.

> So I am very excited to be in the place where I am having progressed some of this work and I still aspire to close the gaps of delivering a curriculum that includes the Māori aspects of the curriculum as a way of life for us in our centres.
>
> I keep my team well informed by the reading I do and I continue to take them with me in some form or another and I am very excited to see and feel the thrill of where the narrative methodology has taken us to. We just love what it has opened up for us…lots of progress in terms of meaning making. Please continue to share your thoughts on what I have reflected with you.

The feedback from research co-directors Jenny and Cheryl to the Maungatapu Kindergarten team on their data also ends with an invitation for further theorising with reference to the MacNaughton (2005) chapter:

> **Interview with Josie**
> What stood out for us in this interview was a sense of trust in the relationship, between this parent and the educators in the centre, the articulation by Josie of how comfortable she felt herself, and with regard to the safety of her child, and that tikanga and te reo are valued. She appreciated the protections around the use of food, not sitting on tables, as well as the use of te reo. She values that Māori are affirmed for being Māori, she recognises a sense of wairua, that spirituality is present amongst the educators, and creates a climate of warmth and acceptance. In terms of responding to this data, deepening our shared understandings, we think that you might like to talk some more with Josie and her child about what makes them feel comfortable, and what are some of the values and beliefs that they bring to the kindergarten, so that these can be further affirmed and acknowledged.
>
> **Interview with Maryanne**
> This mother affirms her children's positive attitude towards what is offered at the kindergarten, the incorporation of a balance of both main cultures, and her acceptance of te reo as being naturally incorporated within the programme, eg "whānau". She also picks up on a "lovely warm feeling" which again indicates a warmth of relationships within the centre, a feeling of children being accepted and free of pressure. Her feelings are expressed also in her sense of loss as her children move on and she will no longer have the regular connection that has been for so long a part of her and her children's life. Her valuing of the teaching of her children to interact and work with people in different situations. In terms of responding to Maryanne, maybe you could talk with her and her children about her feelings around the changing cultural milieu in education towards a valuing and inclusion of te reo and whanaungatanga. How this may be different to the climate that she experienced as a child, and how the current emphasis on respecting Māori values within the climate of the centre may have been part of enabling her children to feel comfortable in different situations.
>
> **Interview with Alice**
> This mother values the sense of belonging and the inclusiveness towards Māori values as being something that is natural within the centre programme. Her son enjoys the Maui legends, their appeal to him may be somewhat surprising to her as being outside her own English childhood? She appears to have some anxiety about difference as she thinks it is positive that her son sees people as all the same and she is concerned about possible segregation. Responding to her, it might be possible to focus on her valuing of inclusiveness

and belonging, and that this might be somewhat connected to her "outsider" status as an English immigrant, and her feelings around the fact that her child is being socialized differently to her own childhood experience. In response to her son, the focus might be on talking and extending with him on his interest in the Maui stories, what is it about Maui that is so appealing to him? Maui is clearly coming from a very Māori context and world view, and maybe you could talk to him about how that might be different from other stories and heroes that he has knowledge of?

How Māui slows the sun
Conversation here regarding tangihanga, something very meaningful to the child. Teacher picks up on hāngi, and enquires re location, rather than the depth of emotion around the death of the grandfather. Conversation around moko and identity, child's response re "beautiful brown skin" shows that this child is picking up on physical, external signifiers, and seeing brown as beautiful indicates a positive interpretation. Interesting to focus on these aspects and lots of potential, if further opportunities arise, to take some of these threads and weave them deeper and further in terms of meanings and understandings of deeper values. We are thinking about exploring ways in which we might talk with children about the underlying values and beliefs that are enacted amongst Māori.

Mat discussion re Mōrena song
Children are identifying reasons for singing the Mōrena song at mat time. Children are aware of the meaning of "mōrena", and have a rationale that it is about learning how to speak Māori, something that is also valued at school, and that is something that kindergartens and schools consider needs to be consciously focused on. This indicates that children are aware that they don't already have Māori as a first language, but despite this lack, that this is something that is valued and can and should be taught and learnt. Further conversations could focus on why it is important hat we all speak Māori, how that will help us to understand Te Ao Māori, and about the deeper meanings that are only expressed through te reo, such as wairua . . . ?

Some of the questions from the MacNaughton chapter re power relations (p. 175) and so forth might further stimulate your thinking and strategies?

During the progression of the research, notes from co-theorising hui showed shifts not only in individual educator co-researchers' thinking but also in the sense of the teams' construction and enactment of themselves as a team. At the first visit by the co-directors to Hawera Kindergarten, in July of 2006, the teachers shared some of their individual experiences within their teaching. Judith Nowotarski, the head teacher, commented that the initial combined hui in April 2006, had led the team to reflect on why they were doing things, and recognising what was welcoming to parents. One of her team, educator co-researcher Robyn O'Dea, commented on her respect for the need for correct Māori pronunciation, and the challenge this imposed when a child had a particularly long Māori name that was not shortened. Another Hawera Kindergarten teacher and educator co-researcher, Joy Rangi, commented that in conversation with a Māori mother, she had learnt that this parent had not previously been aware that parents were welcome in an area within the kindergarten that had actually been set up specifically as an alcove for parents to use to read through their child's portfolio.

At the second visit, in March 2007, the co-directors observed that the Hawera teachers were noticeably more animated, and spoke with a more collective voice. Joy commented that even though the research design required them to focus on certain whānau, she could see that enactment effective across the wider whānau whānui. She shared an example of an immigrant family from England, where the child had enthusiastically embraced aspects of their kindergarten kaupapa, including karakia and the legends of Maui. Robyn was finding that in terms of the research, it was important to build relationships with parents first. She reported that it had been hard to gather the child's voice, but that she had observed that through the mother's growing trust, the child had become more comfortable. Joy considered that the team's collaboration on the research had brought them closer together: "We feel like a unit rather than three individual people working on a project". She shared that through writing stories about a child, a mother who did not know much about her own cultural background had conveyed a sense of connecting at a deeper level, of a sense of affirming identity. Robyn also expressed a shift in her orientation towards parents as "Rather than judging them, the relationship is the most important thing".

This aligns with Nel Noddings' ethic of care, whereby dialogue is instrumental to generating empathy:

> Dialogue is a common search for understanding, empathy, or appreciation … It connects us to each other, and helps to maintain caring relations … Continuing dialogue builds up a substantial knowledge of one another that serves to guide our responses. (Noddings, 1992, p. 22–23, as cited in Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 93)

Robyn's respectful orientation resonates with a "relational ethics" which, rather than seeking an absolute, positivistic "truth", is driven instead by a seeking "to understand but not critique, and where, in making relationships the foreground, we are more able to maintain research rigour" (Pinnegar, 2007, p. 249).

Nadine Wishnowsky, of the Thames Coromandel Playcentre Association, conducted a range of interviews with whānau and educators. She then theorised her data, sending her thoughts to us, the co-directors, prior to our visiting her for further co-theorising discussions. Here are some excerpts from Nadine's co-theorising notes, in which she had reflected on some of the notions that aroused her curiosity:

> **Nadine 10 Mar 07**
> **Whānau Tipu Ngātahi (WTN)**
> (Working Party on Cultural Issues (Rōpū Hanga Tikanga), 1990): We've had this guiding document since 1990 and it gives really clear guidelines and because Playcentre is always at the starting point, it hasn't gone out of date. And when Playcentre wanted to upgrade WTN they got feedback that they didn't want that, they wanted people to come out and support them to do what was in the original book.
>
> **Food in play**
> According to WTN you don't do experiments with food. You don't use foodstuffs. Although we got permission from the rūnanga to use playdough and finger paint because it isn't presented as food.

> **Music**
> There is very little music in playcentres. If there isn't someone who is keen and plays guitar, you don't have any music. And music is a key way of utilising te reo. And it's so standard in this Association and in so many others that I've been into that you don't have anyone to sing. Again it depends on who's in there at the moment. You don't have that continuity. And when I've set up a music activity adults are too shy to get involved.
>
> **Te reo**
> A lot of the Playcentre mothers are quite stunned to learn that Māori is an official language.
>
> **Incorporating tikanga of whakawhanaungatanga**
> When asked how she treats a Māori child, Delia (a Playcentre Supervisor) keeps saying it's all the same but then she keeps identifying ways that it's not. Is it because Te Ao Māori is so incorporated that the supervisor is unaware of it? A lot of the children with Māori ancestry, there is no Māori at home. Some have a Pākehā mother, Māori Dad. Delia is really aware of quite a few things; despite her saying she is "treating them all the same", she is recognising differences, such as not patting Māori children on the heads.
>
> **Re the earlier interviews**
> Hard for Māori engaging in Playcentre, Hera (a Māori Playcentre mother) is often overlooked if there is something going on in the centre. Even recently another mother who had also just done course four was given a job in the centre, and Hera wasn't even asked. So they are paying this other Pākehā person to be there and they didn't even offer it to Hera, even though she is already attending that session. And Hera said, "Why aren't they paying me for that?", and they have to get another process. And now they are talking about employing the other person as a supervisor, and still no employment process. So it was a very marginalising situation. And of course the President has no training, because of the high turnover. Not valuing their people. I think Delia makes it safe because it can be quite threatening for some Māori using their own language. It's good that a Pākehā person is actually modelling and emphasising the importance of including te reo.

The co-directors were mindful of checking in with the co-researchers and the other research facilitator at regular intervals, and also endeavoured to have engendered a research climate whereby all the teachers felt they could approach us for support at any time, balancing financial and temporal constraints with a sense of trust and responsiveness. At the final combined hui, Marion from Maungatapu reflected that:

> Yeah so it has been a really good process for us and we particularly have valued the input that both Cheryl and Jenny have given us. The reality of it I confess is the busy-ness of our lives and so it was really good to have every now and then "Oh they're coming—okay we can focus on that (laughter) . . . and that was why it was so good!"

Shaping of narratives

Recognising the subjective nature of the interpretative moment, dialogue was integral to the shaping of narratives within the project, enabling a process of restorying, clarification, and deepened understandings. The process was not a tidy one, yet this messiness was reframed as the

reality of dealing with the complexities (Bhavnani, 1990) of lived experiences within the hurly-burly of busy early childhood settings. As Jeanette Rhedding-Jones (1995) reflected with regard to her doctoral research, the seemingly arbitrary nature of the data collection may at first appear random, yet, “orderings of meanings” emerged for us through the dialogue of collaborative co-theorising (p. 484). Our “collaborative research community” (Bach, 2007, p. 293) enabled the meaning-making process, shaping a co-constructed shared story that resonates with themes both pre-existent and emergent.

Educator co-researcher centrality

The educator co-researchers’ role was absolutely pivotal to this study, as generators of the narratives that form the backbone of the project. For Lincoln and Denzin (2003, p. 274):

> Narration is a complex social process, a form of social action that embodies the relation between narrator and culture. Taking narrative seriously means directing our attention to that process of embodiment, to what narrators accomplish as they tell their stories, and how that accomplishment is culturally shaped.

As actors in this research, each teacher played a vitally important part in bridging our collective understandings of the experiences of the children and their parents/whānau. For all the teachers, their willingness to give of their precious time and energy was grounded in their personal commitment to the research kaupapa, of validating and honouring the Indigenous culture of this land within our work as early childhood educators (Rau, 2007; Ritchie, 2007c). In addition to their willingness was their openness to be part of a research journey that would inevitably involve reflection on their work and their lives, with its incumbent impetus for change. The research kaupapa was one that embraced and honoured diversity, and the voices of children. These were educators who were brave enough to move beyond the inertia that can restrain our receptiveness to possibilities beyond our current habitual comfort zone, to a lived process of becoming (Clandinin et al., 2006). Through this disposition of optimism, these teachers were open to the generation of new stories and landscapes of possibilities for their work as early childhood educators. Narrative research is characterised by the experience of “shifts and changes, constantly negotiating, constantly reevaluating, and maintaining flexibility and openness to an ever-changing landscape” (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 71). Also integral to narrative inquiry is a constant openness to ongoing re-negotiation of relationships, and the shared understandings, the meaning-making, of experiences (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). Integral to this process was the time allocated, prioritised by the educator co-researchers, to reflecting on their data and its significance.

The interweaving of the personal and professional (Clandinin et al., 2006) is intrinsic within the demeanour, philosophy, enactment, the “ahua” of Pat Leyland, head teacher at Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten. Pat, who was also part of the earlier Whakawhanaungatanga project, saw her involvement in both studies as an extension and reflection of her work as an educator:

> We believe, Pera[3] and I, that we're actually living what the researchers are trying to accomplish and sort of learning along the way. Our philosophy goes something like this: We operate under the korowai of Manaakitanga; Whakapiripiri, which is a sharing; Rangimarie; our whole basis is Whanaungatanga, that's how we work, and that's how Pera lives her life, that's how I live my life.

Longstanding relationships and continuity both within the teaching teams and within those particular communities, added to the depth of understanding and sensitivity that these educator co-researchers resonated in their enactment (Rinaldi, 2006). Structural and process factors are recognised as interwoven and inseparable in discussions of quality early childhood education (Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes, & Cryer, 1997). The collectives of educators who participated in this study exemplified this rich tapestry of quality enactment in their mindful application of a longstanding commitment to their work, communities, and professional learning, taking advantage of opportunities to attend courses, and, of course, to be part of this research project.

Integral to the narrative research process was the gathering of data, which the educators approached in various ways. From initial "narrative moments" (Lincoln & Denzin, 2003, p. 240) interim raw texts of interviews, observations, photos, and reflective co-theorising conversations, shared narratives were constructed, incorporating shared, negotiated interpretations of meanings. We were mindful of the power of the research process, in that "Narrative inquirer's accounts of living alongside do more than create examples—they create realities" (Pinnegar, 2007, p. 249). In many ways, this data gathering was an extension of processes already in place within the integrated networks of communicative experiences (Rinaldi, 2006) that teams had gradually developed over their years of practice.

Educator co-researchers were fascinated with the data being shared from other centres, feeling resonances, respectful appreciation of others' efforts, and a sense of collectivity. During the co-theorising hui, the teachers shared their understandings of the importance of families/whānau in providing the context that would enable them to understand the children's kōrero. An example from the data from Papamoa Kindergarten was a conversation with two particular children who have had experience going to the marae:

> Teacher: Have you been to a marae?
> Child: I have been to a marae. White dogs
> Teacher: What happened on the marae?
> Child: The cat was going to bite me.
> Teacher: Who did you go to the marae with?
> Child: My Mum. My Aunty picked us up there.
> Teacher: What did you do?
> Child: Playing with L. He was laughing at me. He was naughty.

---

[3] Pera Paekau, who teaches alongside Pat.

While seeing some humour in these responses, the teachers also read understandings beyond these verbalisations, recognising the sub-text of the presence of cousins to play with and the importance of seeking further understandings by discussing the children's comments with their families. Carolyn O'Connor, from Papamoa Kindergarten, explained that talking with families provides context for the children's experiences: "That's where with families, when they put it into context what [the children] are saying, like the 'white dog' . . . That was the way to extend it because actually that's what the child experienced but they might not be able to tell you . . ."

Judith Nowotarski, from Hawera Kindergarten's co-theorising added to Carolyn's with regard to the context implicit in the child's response:

> When children talk about the marae, "We have kai, we play, there were dogs", because we as Māori know what those statements mean in context. It is most likely they have shared in a pōhiri, karakia, waiata, hongi, kissed lots of Aunts, Uncles, cousins and celebrated with kai. They will have also played with cousins, walked around the marae. It's also the innate learning that takes place—wairua. It's acceptance. There's trust in the people around them and they are not told what to do, they learn by being involved. It's ways of doing. The person that growled me would be the person that gave me kai. It gives a sense of whānau within whānau. It's an extension to the collective. They see they have a place there, they work it out—who is in the front, who is in the back.

Judith locates the children's kōrero in the wider context of her lived experience on marae, connecting their statements to the general experiences of tikanga, of kawa, of whanaungatanga enacted through everyday marae rituals. Carolyn later reflected that:

> Being part of the research also helps you to continue the journey. It highlighted specific needs, particular things became more apparent and encouraged us to look for solutions that reflected a more in-depth bicultural approach. It was about hearing and seeing the child's voice and their learning. It was about kōrero with whānau and developing closer relationships so that the wheels keep turning. The narrative methodology gives context and tells the whole story. It makes you reflect on your practice as often our day is busy and full. We can sit down and write what has happened, the "why" and the "how we can improve and move on in our journey". It has been very affirming for us to hear that what we put in every day is the right stuff.

Changes were not necessarily dramatic, but were seen retrospectively as perspectives shifted with realisations gained over time, through dialogue and reflection, in line with the Freirean notion of praxis (Freire, 1972). As has been noted in previous narrative research with educators, "change happened as each teacher encountered a situation, met a child, heard a story, and began to use that moment as a trigger to restory who they were in shifting, evolving ways" (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 132).

The final combined hui was an invaluable opportunity, enabling a simultaneous individual and collective reflection on the ways in which involvement in the research had enabled shifts in practice, resulting in a renegotiated curriculum of lives (Clandinin et al., 2006, p. 147). The

following points arose from that hui, with regard to the educator co-researchers' positioning and realisations as a result of their participation in the study. Educator co-researchers:

- owned their process and were engaged with their data—in some ways the process was more important than the product
- relished the role of being "hands-on" researchers
- valued their strong relationships with their parents, who were very willing to participate in the research
- had realised that the research focus motivated them to move together despite their perceived different backgrounds and understandings—for example, Māori and Pākehā teachers working together; Judith as head teacher at Hawera Kindergarten having realised that she did not need to wait for her team to come alongside; and Marion, head teacher at Maungatapu Kindergarten seeing her role as leading her team
- expressed that their involvement had strengthened their sense of a shared philosophy, "heartfelt" commitment and focus involving changing attitudes
- appreciated the flexibility of the research design, and that this enabled them to tailor their own strategies to their own context
- expressed recognition of the challenges faced by Māori teachers, whether manawhenua or manuhiri, in terms of safety around negotiating local tikanga and kawa
- were creative about their data collection, strategising with different methods when they were dissatisfied with their initial attempts—for example, Carolyn from Papamoa Kindergarten interviewing the parents and children together
- appreciated that the narrative style allowed them to express their own feelings, and take their own approach within each particular context
- had a sense of support and feeling safe, while "being brave and moving gently forward" (Pat, Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten)
- had embraced the sense of unpredictability and freedom in not knowing what "the answers" were going to be
- enjoyed the long-term nature of the study and being able to dedicate the release time as an intensive focus on their analysis and writing
- appreciated the visits from co-directors, the discussion, the affirmation of their process and their data
- were aware of their progress on a long-term journey
- had demonstrated a willingness to share their learning with others—Hawera have presented to a cluster of teachers from their association, Richard Hudson Kindergarten to the Early Childhood Education Research Hui at Te Kura Akau Taitoka, University of Otago College of Education, on August 3, 2007; Judith Nowotarski from Hawera had offered to mentor another centre in her area that had requested support
- were celebrating their role as early childhood educators, with visible enjoyment, celebration, and demonstration of manaakitanga, appreciating the inspiration that they gained from the opportunities to share their learnings

The team from Richard Hudson Kindergarten reflected on their involvement in the research:

> Wow. How do you write it down? By being part of the research we have been on a wonderful side road on our journey. It has given us the opportunity to step back from our daily doings and look at the big picture. We have been inspired by mixing with teachers from around the country who are on similar journeys to us. It has been amazing Professional Learning to see and hear what/how they do their things Māori in their unique communities. We have felt affirmed in our practice because of the research and have a huge pride in the education we deliver to the tamariki in our community.
>
> The reaffirmation that we have gotten from the research is just so wonderful. It is the motivation you need every now and then to refocus on the importance of what you are doing and to dig a bit deeper to get to the next level (we've all just enrolled for a "New Zealand History from a Māori Perspective" course). We feel very fortunate to be in a team that is so genuinely committed to Te Ao Māori that we couldn't stop even if we wanted to! It is a life-long passion that will carry on into post-teaching life.

Similarly, the Hawera Kindergarten team reported that:

> Using narrative methodologies has absolutely enhanced our reflective understandings as we have travelled this special journey. Capturing the tamaiti and whānau "voice" is a challenge but so beautiful when we do! Sometimes we were so engrossed in conversations and in the experience that we "forgot" to record and document! As a team we would revisit these moments but even so they then became narratives of our "voice". "Gathering data to actually capture the child's voice on the spot was difficult. We mostly discussed things with each other and used voice recorder" (Joy). Capturing the amazing journey we made as a team—our own understandings, experiences and expectations—will not be forgotten. We can only hope that we will always be able to practice and pursue the things we have come to treasure and value.

The team, while appreciative of the narrative methodologies employed, nonetheless express their awareness that they as adults/teachers are a filter through which the children's voices are inevitably mediated.

Tamariki and whānau voice

Although our dominant western culture highly values verbal and written languages, children communicate in many ways. Yet our educational paradigm continues to focus primarily on verbal and written literacies, prioritising these over the great variety of non-verbal alternatives (Rinaldi, 2006). Teachers often rely on written communication such as newsletters and notice boards to convey information to parents. In this study, our educator co-researchers explored many alternative ways of generating dialogue with children and their whānau/families. One of the key insights gained from this project, was the deepened understanding and empathy generated by the teachers, when they made the time to sit and talk responsively with parents and other relatives of children in their centres.

Considerations of relationships between educational settings and parents/families may use terminology such as "partnership with parents", yet this "partnership" model has been critiqued as implicitly reflecting "the power and practices of the dominant group—the white middle-class that has always had strong relationships with the school" (Graue, Kroeger, & Prager, 2001, p. 470). These models have been critiqued for their lack of analysis of power effects, in that they reflect the values and assumptions of the powerful articulate middle-class white majority, ignoring the ways that these hidden power effects render invisible parents or families of different class, linguistic, and ethnic backgrounds (Graue, Kroeger, & Prager, 2001). Central to discourses which view parents/family as active social agents, is the notion of giving voice to all potential parent and family participants, by proactively generating openings for all parents to be active participants within the early childhood setting, in ways that may have previously been more the privilege of the white middle-class. This recognises and validates parents' and families' roles as "active participants in their child's experience" and "agents in cultural meaning making" (Graue, Kroeger, & Prager, 2001, p. 493). The implementation of Tiriti-based early childhood practice reflects new possibilities and dynamics for these notions of parent/family agency within their children's educational settings. In this study, we observed the interaction of two fluid dynamics, both "processes of becoming" (Graue, Kroeger, & Prager, 2001, p. 471), that of Tiriti-based practice and wider parent/whānau involvement and engagement within their child's centre-based learning.

Dahlberg, Moss, and Pence (2007) have recently reflected on new paradigms for understanding childhood, in which children emerge as co-constructors of knowledges, cultures, and identities. Children, in this view, and that of Reggio Emilia's Malaguzzi, are "rich in potential, strong, powerful, and competent" (2007, p. 48). Viewed through this lens, we admire the agency of children as social actors, whose voices, engaged in democratic dialogue, should be heard and responded to. This also involves a reconsideration of the taken-for-granted exercise of adult power, as well as respect for children's resilience and resistance to this power (p. 49). Along with Carlina Rinaldi (2006), they advocate a "pedagogy of listening", "an approach based on listening rather than speaking" (Rinaldi, 1993, p. 104, as cited in Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 2007, p. 60). For Rinaldi (2006, p. 65), a pedagogy of listening involves engaging a "sensitivity to the patterns that connect" us to others, "abandoning ourselves to the conviction that our understanding and our own being are but small parts of a broader, integrated knowledge that holds the universe together". Listening, in this view, serves as "a metaphor for having the openness and sensitivity to listen and be listened to", a receptivity inclusive of all our senses, responding to multiple ways of knowing, being, and expressing. It also includes interior listening, "listening to ourselves". Residing behind the act of listening are desires of curiosity and emotion. We are receptive to the influence of the emotions of others, unmediated "and intrinsic to the interactions between communicating subjects". At the heart of this pedagogy of listening sits a disposition of "Listening as welcoming and being open to differences, recognising the value of the other's point of view and interpretation". This requires a deep awareness, a suspension of our judgements and prejudices, a willingness to move into uncertainty, and an "openness to change" (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 65).

Children, like adults, are naturally social beings, for whom communication is central. Since "the colonial project was about disconnecting Indigenous peoples from their histories, their beliefs and spirituality, values and symbols; ways of thinking, feeling, interacting with and constructing the world, cultures and language" (Skerrett, 2007, p. 6), a key task for Tiriti-based practice is to affirm Māori children's reconnection with their whakapapa and the knowledges that align with this. This is reflected in *Te Whāriki*'s requirement that educators promote and protect the languages and symbols of children's cultures, including Māori stories, symbols, arts, and crafts within the programme (Ministry of Education, 1996b, p. 72). Educators are thus positioned at a site of tension, in their need to fulfill the expectation to provide an environment that promotes these Māori symbols, while maintaining interactive and curriculum responsiveness to aspirations and expressions of children for some of whom their only experience of Māori language and culture is that available within the early childhood centre. In this study, we were particularly interested to learn more about how children and whānau/families, including Māori, Pākehā, and Tauiwi, experienced their lives within early childhood centres where the educators were committed to implementing Tiriti-based practice as required by the national early childhood curriculum, *Te Whāriki*.

Tamariki agency

Vicki Stuart of Morrinsville Early Learning Centre had recorded what she described as "some impromptu moments where tamariki show how natural the tikanga is within their lives" and how it is a part of the programme and more importantly the lives of tamariki in Aotearoa. In one of Vicki's narratives, she noted a mother, who had been attending for about six weeks, arriving with her under-one-year-old son. She came in and sat him up at the high chair, saying to him "E noho [name]. Here is some kai".

Vicki comments that:

> This seems very small, but it struck the staff, as we knew this was a parent who had previously told us that she did not know any te reo, and in the past I had spoken to her about some of the protocol that we follow and the reasons for it. She has also spent some time in the centre with her son. I spoke with her when she returned and asked her about speaking te reo and she said that she had heard those words being used and thought she would like to use them and keep working to use more. For me this is the sort of moment where you realise the impact we have as teachers on not only children's lives, but whānau as well.

Vicki is sensitive to the selectivity of her role as "researcher", realising that she and her staff are interpreting this scenario, of a very young child, from their own perspective. She is intuitively recognising the issue of "whether capturing a moment in time is capturing the child's reality or whether it is the researcher's representation of the child's reality, given his or her own filter and assumptions" (Jipson & Jipson, 2005, p. 42). In order to check out her perceptions, Vicki follows this up by talking with the mother. Children's agency in sharing centre learnings and practices at home appeared throughout the data across the various centres, and often involved dialogue between educators and whānau. In another narrative from Vicki, she reflected on how the centre's

use of karakia, with understanding of its context, purpose, and significance having now entered not only the children's spontaneous discourse, but also that the children were taking these enactments home, and making links between similar practices in their homes and the centre. In this narrative, children sitting at the kai tables spontaneously sang a karakia mo te kai (karakia spoken before a meal), and after this, a child turned to Vicki and asked "What's one for after eating?" Vicki's response was that she could sing any song she wanted after eating. On this the child sang "Thank you God for giving us food", and informed Vicki that "We sing that at home". This child shows her sense of agency in making these connections, and in expressing her expectation for karakia, as a ritual enactment of appreciation and acknowledgement.

Ramila Sadikeen from Brooklands supplied this narrative of children leading mat time, which their centre terms "Whāriki taima":

> Yesterday the children took an interesting turn when the teachers decided not to take Whāriki taima. The children already knew to predict what was about to happen and were already on the Whāriki and three girls were taking charge of the situation taking on the role of the teachers. The three girls were very much empowered. They animated the role of the teachers very well and moved with great ease from one activity to the other. The whole process of karakia, waiata and "show and tell" took place with ease and great co-operation from all other participants on the Whāriki. They facilitated opportunities for all children who wanted "show and tell" [to have] a chance to exhibit their toys. One in her role of teacher extended the child showing to tell by asking questions and empowering the participant to talk more in showing their toys, almost imitating word for word what teachers do in their practice such as "Tell us what it is?" "Where did you get it from?" The following day the teachers asked who they were emulating and the three girls said that they were being the two Pākehā teachers.

Ramila's theorising of this scenario made links to theories of cultural congruence (Bartolome, 1994; Hyun, 1998; May, 1999; Osborne, 1991) reflecting:

> . . . that if the children are emulating and making links and modelling the Pākehā teachers, I think the Pākehā teachers have an enormous level of power to instil cultural sensitivity and cultural comfort in children. To this end, are the Pākehā teachers underestimating their ability to extend the cultural comfort in children? If so, are the bicultural elements reflected in the curriculum taken into consideration in terms of doing so . . . ?

The discussion further confirmed that seeking the "otherness" is important and that there are many advantages and a great deal of work to be done in terms of peeling back the layers of discomfort and awareness of cultures and differences and the seeking of relative ease—that is, making our input salient in the environment.

"The meanings and identities that children can construct may be many and variable, but they are restricted to the alternatives to which the children have access" (Hughes & MacNaughton, 2001, p. 123). From the "social repertoire" of available discourses, certain of these will be "more familiar, more accessible, and therefore more attractive than others because they have a stronger institutional base" (Hughes & MacNaughton, 2001, p. 125). In exercising their agency in relation

to the discourses that are available to them (Jeanette Rhedding-Jones, 1995), these girls' choices of emulating their Pākehā teachers reflects the "normalization and universalization of majoritarian forms of identity" (S. May, 1999, p. 34). Ramila understands their identification with the Pākehā teachers as their model, recognising from her positioning as an "outsider" the salience of the dominant culture. What is of particular interest to this study, is that Ramila's Pākehā colleagues are modelling the use of te reo Māori, karakia, and waiata, thus "normalising" this practice.

Māori ways of being and doing as normal

A legacy of our history is the colonialist monopolisation of the right to be normal. As Linda Mead (1996, p. 27), has pointed out, in order to assimilate as "normal" in Pākehā terms, Māori have tried to be "unseen as Māori", resulting in a loss of identity. The bestowal of normality (Wetherell & Potter, 1992) to the dominant Pākehā culture has left Māori with the attribution of "difference", and a sense of having had their identities stolen (Henry, 1995; Ramsden, 1994). *Te Whāriki*'s expectations hold promise for re-normalising this othering that has historically led to the exclusion and devaluing of Māori knowledges within our education system and programmes. Vikki Sonnenberg, formerly of Galbraith Kindergarten, shared with us the story behind a photo of Neil, a child whose family had recently immigrated here from England, wearing a tīpare (headband) and piupiu (fringed garment) that he had crafted:

> Neil asked the teacher what would make him more Māori, and the teacher said, "Make a headband", and so he went to make a headband with paper and did the little koru, and then he went back to her and said, "What would make me more Māori", and then the teacher said "Oh I don't know, go and ask Vikki". And so he came to me and goes, "What would make me more Māori?", so we talked about it, and I asked him, "What do you think would make you more Māori?", and you know we were trying to open up the dialogue and so what happened from there was that he decided from what was around him, we looked at books and the props that we had around us. And he was asking me about, do I paint myself brown? I said "No, I'm Māori". His Mum had said, "Māoris are brown and we are white", so he wanted to paint his hands and things brown, but we talked about, "That'll wash off", so as you can see he's got a piupiu on so he's trying to be more Māori and he was thinking Māori, trying to speak Māori, started singing our Māori songs. When I talked to his Mum she laughed. She was okay because of all our previous kōrero, she understood what was going on.

Children can be viewed as storied beings with multiple frames of reference (O'Loughlin, 1992; O'Loughlin, 1995). In Neil's story we see an example of children's agency as Neil enacts his right to define his identity understandings (Siraj-Blatchford & Siraj-Blatchford, 1999; Skutnabb-Kangas, 1991), which are fluid, negotiated (Skutnabb-Kangas, 1991), complex, shifting, and multiple (Greene, 1995; Noddings, 1995).This process is inevitably influenced by the representations and discourses that are available to children (Siraj-Blatchford, 1995) since identity construction takes place within the context of collective social processes (Rogoff, 1998) occurring in cultural locations that serve as milieux for a sense of voice, place, and identity (H. Giroux, 1994). At Galbraith Kindergarten, Neil has had access to discourses that value being Māori. "A

discourse is a sort of 'identity kit' which comes complete with the appropriate costume and instructions on how to act, talk, and often write, so as to take on a particular role that others will recognize" (Gee, 1989, p. 7). Neil has created for himself symbolically the costume that he associates with being Māori—the tīpare and piupiu. The bicultural identities (Darder, 1991) that are being explored here by Neil with support from his teacher and parent are only available since Māori knowledges and representations are being offered in this setting, as counter-discourses to those of the dominant culture (Simon, 1987). Neil is attracted to te reo, an implicit recognition that languages are central to identities (Giroux & McLaren, 1992).

Carolyn O'Connor from Papamoa Kindergarten shared a hāngi story. The school next door was having a hāngi as a fundraiser:

> One of our whānau was responsible for organising this. So their child had been part of the process. Before the hāngi she came to me and with great delight told me that there was a pig hanging upside down in the garage. "Why is there a pig hanging upside down in your garage?" I asked. She tells me "Because Dad went to his mate's place to get it".
>
> "What are you going to do with it?"
>
> "Take it to the hāngi"
>
> "What's a hāngi?" I ask.
>
> She begins to laugh: "You know what's a hāngi!" She runs off.
>
> After the weekend I begin to ask her about how the hāngi was. She tells me that there were lots of people but is not into further conversation.
>
> COMMENTS: This was not a one-off experience for her and so she does not think it is different or maybe exciting. Her main joy was seeing the pig hung up. This is shown again by her laughing at me asking what a hāngi was!!!! "Of course you know what one is, don't ask silly questions!"

For this child, a hāngi is a part of her regular experiences, a normal occurrence, which she presumes is the same for her teacher. Carolyn's question is therefore deemed unworthy of being answered, dismissed, according to Carolyn, as a "silly question". As Linda Mead has written, "I have taken it for granted that being Māori is normal and that our experiences within the world and our reactions to the world within which we live are what should normally be expected, given the histories and social realities of the world" (1996, p.27).

Ramila Sadikeen from Brooklands Kindergarten contributed this transcript of a conversation with Ryan which she entitled: "Is Māori normal?"

> Teacher: What's tēnā koe and karakia spoken in?
>
> R: It's in Māori.
>
> T: Is singing and talking in Māori good?
>
> R: Yes! Because I like it. Because it's Māori. Everyone is supposed to talk in Māori.

T: Why do you think that was Ryan?

R: Because it's good. It's good because I can sing. I like "E te Atua" because I like singing. It's a normal language that's Māori!

T: Where did you hear that word "normal"?

R: I don't know!

T: Oh, is it good or bad?

R: It's good.

Ramila responded with interest to Ryan's comment that Māori is a "normal language", and further generated from Ryan his understanding that this was positive.

Marion Dekker of Maungatapu Kindergarten conducted interviews with a Māori parent, Josie, who had recently been employed to work in the kindergarten with the children. Marion asked her how her perceptions had changed now she was in her new role as a kaiako.

Josie commented:

> I have noticed that with the teachers' use of Te Reo it is being used more regularly, I am hearing it more through conversation. You have become more comfortable and it's at a point now where it's just a part of you. The children understand the language and their understanding is clearer. They aren't threatened by it, it is normal, a normal part of the kindy.

The following kōrero between Josie and Marion highlights a confidence and connectedness generated by kaiako within this centre, a shared respectfulness indicative of the building of a Te Tiriti of Waitangi partnership in praxis. There is a comfortableness in the conversation with both teachers sharing their perceptions of how Māori values and practices are integrated across the centre, and the holistic world view of incorporating mind, spirit, body and emotions prioritised as being essential to children's learning. The description of a feeling of oneness within the centre speaks of a collective, a rōpū with a shared responsibility for learning as well as caring for each other. Josie describes the learning for children being enacted through te reo, their interactions with one another and the naturalness of how it is embedded within the centre, highlighting the gentle approach and gradual process by kaiako. The concept of relationships which are built over time remaining ongoing are articulated, Josie explaining that although her daughter is now at school it does not mean that her association with the centre has ceased, the relationship still exists.

Josie: And that's what Māori is. It's just a lifestyle and it's about being aware of body, mind, spirit, soul, emotion and children go away with the confidence of knowing who they are and it doesn't have to be tied to one culture.

Marion: What changes have you seen since Danielle left to go to school? Our last conversation was just before she went to school and you talked a lot about the feeling of the place.

Josie: Well my perspective has changed as I was a parent but coming in and working alongside the children and for me the feeling is one of oneness. There is a feeling of oneness and belonging and regardless of whether Danielle is at school or not the feeling of belonging is there and that's wonderful. You can pat yourselves on the back because I guess in your own ways you have changed, you have all been open to this growth.

Marion: I've really enjoyed learning the weaving, the massage and the benefits of having the wharenui and learning some of the terminologies surrounding it such as the tukutuku panels, the whakapapa panels in there and it's interesting learning alongside the children.

Josie: And with the children, their perception of yourselves Marion, Debbie and Jude that's fantastic. The privilege that knowing that because you are the kaiako, because of you, that they can do what they do. The wharenui represents who you are. It's a place of learning and you have incorporated so many things in this place of learning and children can evolve or go off to school and then they are like Danielle and want to come back, which is understandable. It's such a different environment for them and I guess they realise the freedom of expression and being able to do things at their pace, in their time and learn to their abilities changes when they go to school.

There is evidence here of reciprocity and whakamana (Ministry of Education, 1996b), as these relationships enhance the depth of experiences available to all.

Reflecting on the meanings of their first set of data collection, the team from Papamoa had wondered about the paradoxical "invisibility" to their interviewed children of the integration of te reo and tikanga within their programme:

> Te reo and waiata are part of our everyday programme each morning and afternoon children sing a Māori welcome song and legends, stories and te reo are part of our emergent curriculum. It was interesting that children did not recognise the use of te reo or Māori—children did not identify with the language and culture. Does that mean that we are integrating the Māori language and culture so that children don't see it as different, it is just part of the curriculum or do we need to accentuate when and why Māori culture is an integral part of our curriculum?

Early childhood centres which honour indigeneity alongside the dominant culture may be generative of a "third space" (Bhabha, 1994; Gonzalez-Mena, 2001; S. May, 1999; McLaren, 1995; Meredith, 1998; Penetito, 1998) transcendent of dichotomised and essentialised expressions of culture, providing pathways that move beyond colonised educational frames (Rau, 2007; Ritchie, 2007b, 2007c).

Understandings of culture are linked to those of identity (Rosaldo, 1989). People's identities are shaped by their life experiences and the discourses that have enabled them to articulate their social and cultural positionings. Michael King (1999) has pointed to the transformation of both Māori and Pākehā cultures through interaction, yet the openings have been unevenly balanced due to the unequal power effects of colonisation. Whilst it is interesting to observe these positionings

becoming available to non-Māori, there remain many issues for Māori in terms of their need to reclaim lost identities, and specific tribal identities, rather than an essentialised homogenised Māori culture. This is an ongoing tension that underpins the collective narrativising of our shared stories (Richardson, 1997), and our reflection on what cultural positionings are made available to children; that is, what they experience as "normal".

Affirming Māori identities and aspirations

In explaining the Māori conceptualisation of whānau and whanaungatanga, Rangihau considered that "family to the Māori mind is really part of one's self" (1975, as cited in A. Durie, 1997, p. 150). Māori world views position the child as "part of a complex system of whakapapa which includes those people immediately around the child, and the tipuna of whom the child is a living manifestation" (Mead, 1996, p. 263). Traditional ways of living as whānau and hapū, have been tempered by the constraints and challenges of urban settings. Identity and identification for Māori remain linked to traditional whakapapa connections to land and landscapes, the loss of territory coinciding with the loss of language undermining previously strong identity points of reference (A. Durie, 1997). Schools (and early childhood services) have reflected a colonial prioritisation of English language and European superiority that denigrated Māori oral transmission of history and life stories (A. Durie, 1997; Mead, 1996). Arohia Durie (1997, p. 154) writes that "the ideologies of cultural imperialism, and of assimilation and appropriation underpinning them have not disappeared". For Linda Mead, "As a mode through which colonialism is realised, schooling has played a significant role in dis-ordering Māori social relationships" (1996, p. 282). Submersion of their Māori identity has been a strategy employed by Māori to counter the dehumanising effect of the colonial onslaught, yet, "Identities continue to be made and remade as life circumstances change, so that even the submerged can recover a Māori identity given confidence and opportunity" (A. Durie, 1997, p. 157).

Amiria and Lawrence, Māori parents from Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten, articulated their aspirations for their tamariki in response to a written form given out to participating families by the educator co-researchers at this centre. Their clarity in prioritising conceptual values integral to their child's learning represents active agency (Graue, Kroeger, & Prager, 2001), with expectations of the early childhood centre to provide Māori learning pathways for their tamaiti. Under the heading, "What I would like in an educational institute for my children", Amiria listed:

- pride in themselves in everything, for example, sex; culture; colour; height; thoughts
- the ability to express themselves and their individuality
- to learn how to socialise and work with others both similar to them or different
- an education, knowledge of their history both nationally and locally
- multicultural experiences with the other children around them
- genuine caring teachers
- the embracing of whānau/families

- a kindergarten that seeks participation and feedback from families and informs them about the goings on in the kindy
- that they love where they attend.

Amiria gives clear messages that her tamariki need to be in an environment which upholds the mana of both tamaiti and the whānau. Learning experiences couched within Māori values of aroha, whanaungatanga, and manaakitanga are deemed integral to nurturing a cultural, individual and collective tamaiti. Amiria's kōrero has resonance with the vision of Mason Durie (2001), that Māori educational advancement be framed around the following goals for tamariki:

- to live as Māori
- to actively participate as citizens of the world
- to enjoy good health and a high standard of living.

Mason Durie's assertion that Māori children should exercise their rights to enjoy their lives simultaneously as Māori and as citizens of the world is tempered by the reality that "many Māori children and other New Zealanders are unable to participate in early childhood education because of cost, location, and cultural distance", and that consequently, their "future participation in other areas of society are likely to be similarly compromised" (Durie, 2003, p. 6). It is this issue of "cultural distance" that has been transgressed by the proactivity of the teachers at Belmont–Te Kupenga, as evidenced in further data from this study. Amiria explains what she values about the kindergarten programme at Belmont–Te Kupenga:

> Good use of Māori language through:
>
> - Song: Which is important because it encourages children to memorise Māori words and sentences. Children can then remember something in Māori and sing it at home, maybe even introduce it to the home which is a friendly way of parents becoming familiar to the Māori language. Quite often Māori learnt at this kindergarten will be the most a lot of families will experience, so positive learning through music and song is very important. Also memory of song lasts much longer than speech or writing
> - Mihi: Which is important to show children the importance for Māori in showing respect to the mauri (life force) of all things living—Past, Animate, and Inanimate. Also to show our children that the tone of a mihi set the proceeding Pōwhiri /Hui
> - Actions and Activities: Rākau and poi, waiata etc help enjoyment and works on motor skills and fitness etc which works in well with the mainstream education plan
> - Whanaungatanga: Making children and their families feel safe and part of a big family, showing the caring and sharing aspects, both Māori and other cultures.
> - Tikanga: To ensure biculturalism, proper Māori ways and rules of engagement should be taught. My belief is if this is taught alongside a mainstream education then when the two major signing cultures of New Zealand's founding document

recognise the importance of each other's cultures then we are better equipped to move into appreciating more than two cultures and embracing multiculturalism.

Amiria expresses the interrelationship of waiata and kupu Māori, creating possibilities for tamariki to introduce their families to te reo Māori in an informal way. Tamariki have agency as they are both learners and teachers in this context. Māori respect for the mauri of both animate and inanimate beings, protocols of mihi, pōwhiri, and using rākau and poi are being acknowledged and integrated within the kindergarten. Te Tiriti o Waitangi is acknowledged as the foundation document for peoples in Aotearoa.

Lawrence's narrative reinforces this thinking in sharing his dreams/goals for his child in early education. He desires an early childhood service that will offer his child the following:

- confidence/self esteem
- social interaction of bicultural settings
- opportunities to discover his unique significance as tangata whenua
- development of positive routines and relationships with kaiako to foster healthy learning habits
- a place where they feel safe and are encouraged to express themselves
- a stable platform in which they can move on to primary school without having to overcome huge obstacles.

Positioning himself and his family as tangata whenua in Aotearoa, Lawrence stipulates that opportunities be provided within the centre to ensure his tamaiti/whānau be able to explore their uniqueness as tangata whenua. Lawrence voices his reasons for continuing to enrol children at Belmont–Te Kupenga. He considers that the kindergarten "fosters an atmosphere where children are encouraged to reaffirm their identity" through:

- karakia—mo te kai, timatanga, whakamutunga
- waiata which establish links with mana whenua and tangata whenua
- introduction (formally) to new children in class and establishing links with other children already engaged in class (whakawhanaungatanga)
- field trips to make connections with local rohe recognising importance of Te Taiao (e.g. Te Winika visit and Roger Hamon Bush)
- recognition of the importance of each individual child and of their contribution to the wairua and mauri of the group
- strong use of te reo and mätauranga throughout learning and non-learning situations (e.g. use of posters, pictures, puzzles)

Lawrence writes that:

> All of the above mentioned items have (I believe) a profound effect on breaking down perceived barriers which often hinder Māori parents' full involvement in their children's education due to being "whakamā" or shy. These points in fact reinforce kaupapa Māori by observance of tikanga and kawa whilst not impinging on the needs of non-Māori children and families.

Lawrence's analysis of what is happening for tamariki/whānau at Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten highlights that educators who have knowledges and understandings of Te Ao Māori values and beliefs have the potential to engage and initiate Māori responsiveness. The concept of "whakamā" is integral to Māori ways of being (Metge, 1986), in that, for example, in a Māori context children are taught not to stare at someone in the eyes. Whereas other cultures may promote a direct gaze as demonstrating confidence and honesty, Māori are inclined to look down or away, this being a "whakamā" process, and a required demonstration of respect. Lawrence's references to the enacted curriculum at Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten enabling tamariki and whānau Māori to shift beyond being "whakamā" significantly affirms the powerful role educators can have when facilitating a Te Ao Māori paradigm which creates positive quality provision for tamariki and whānau Māori. Lawrence appreciates the enactment of rituals of welcoming, whanaungatanga connectedness, and concern for the spiritual wellbeing for all those present, that are part of the everyday practice at this centre. Lawrence's perception of this kindergarten's programme highlights its inclusiveness, the wider ramification being that all children and families attending gain access to a Māori world.

Lawrence and Amiria's reflections are consistent with factors constituent of a Māori identity described by Arohia Durie (1997) as including knowledges of whakapapa, mātua tupuna, connections to whānau, hapū, iwi, and tūrangawaewae, facility with te reo Māori, understanding of tikanga, and freedom of choice. Contemporary Māori theorising repositions a Māori identity as a positive "point of difference … and an inexhaustible source of innovation and creativity" (Hui Taumata 2005, Summary Report, p. 4, as cited in Sullivan, 2007, p. 193).

Prioritising the importance of Māori identity formation for their tamaiti, Māori fathers in this study shared thoughts which both challenge and implicate teachers in their provision of learning for their tamariki within early childhood settings. Lawrence, the father from Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten and Lyall, a Playcentre father, stipulate Māori values and beliefs they uphold as integral to curriculum for their tamaiti. Drawing from a Māori conceptual base, these mātua articulate values located in whakapapa ascribing importance to the principles of wairua and mauri. Rituals of karakia and enactment of te reo and waiata are also viewed as integral to mātauranga processes. Lyall recalls his grandmother's teachings "of being proud to be Māori and to have what we have". His aspiration for his daughters is that they have access to education which enhances their enactment of being Māori. Kōrero from these mātua raise implications and tensions for other early childhood services. Their dialogue stipulates what they perceive as valid curriculum, quality provision inclusive of knowledges and understandings of Te Ao Māori. While fellow co-researchers from centres and services are committed to progressing a Te Tiriti-based partnership, there are other teachers and services who are not validating Te Ao Māori and who therefore render tamariki and whānau Māori invisible. Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu was adamant that Māori should retain their identity as Māori, and that Maori should acknowledge being Māori as a source of pride (in Simpson, 1992).

Heni, a parent from Papamoa Kindergarten, reflected on her whānau's experiences there. Heni has had two children come to this kindergarten, and another starting this year (2008). Heni also looks

after another child whom she brings to afternoon kindergarten sessions. Here is an extract from an interview by kaiako Carolyn O'Connor with Heni:

> Kaiako: Remembering back to when you first came to the kindergarten what did you notice about the things we did here?
>
> Heni: My first impression was that there were hammers and nails and that scared me but then it encouraged the kids to find their confidence as well. That was cool. I noticed all the paints and crafty things out to be used.
>
> Kaiako: What were you looking for in a kindergarten?
>
> Heni: I noticed all the arty stuff because my son was into art and it was convenient.
>
> Kaiako: Were there any things Māori that you remember noticing?
>
> Heni: I remember seeing pois in the kete, I remember seeing the koru designs and also I was asked to build up the poi supply again.
>
> Kaiako: How did you feel about being asked?
>
> Heni: It was good and fun, the kids helped me so they learnt what was inside the poi and what the string does.
>
> Kaiako: Did the teachers ask you to do that straight away?
>
> Heni: No we developed a relationship first by me coming in to help out, so I brought in my other son and I was pregnant with my daughter at the time so I thought instead of keeping him home with me I would bring him in here, plus my son was too shy to stay by himself .
>
> Kaiako: Did you feel that they asked you to do these things because you were Māori?
>
> Heni: It was just good to help out, they would ask nicely first, Julie would ask if you would mind and at the time I was in a kapahaka group so they would ask me to do the kiddie stuff we did in the group, action songs that I used to like, just because I was affiliated with the kapahaka group. Julie had confidence in asking me to help out.
>
> Kaiako: Do you think this is a bicultural kindergarten?
>
> Heni: Definitely, multicultural, seeing Indians, seeing them as well as Islanders and Asians as well as Māoris and Europeans. I also notice you speak some of the different languages like the good morning songs.

Kanohi kitea, "the seen face, that is, present yourself to people face to face", denotes respectfulness, of a face seen being a face known (Mead, 1996, p. 221). Heni, in this kanohi-ki-te-kanohi process at Papamoa Kindergarten, expresses how she initially felt challenged by the carpentry activities in progress, her fears subsiding when she observed the confidence and competence exuded by the tamariki. Her knowledge of her son's interests directs her to the creative arts resources, a Māori lens identifying visual and tangible Te Ao Māori resources. A

Māori cultural context of building relationships over time is evident, as Heni's relationship with teacher Julie strengthened through interactions and experiences alongside her tamariki. Through this process, Heni came to feel comfortable to contribute her specialist Māori expertise within the centre programme. Heni responds to the notion of the kindergarten as "bicultural" with recognition of the kindergarten's affirmation of a range of different participating ethnicities. While valuing the inclusion of Māori within the centre, her response indicates a possible wariness of a "bicultural" paradigm that might exclude many of those participating (Sullivan, 2007) instead affirming the reality and richness of all cultures and languages present.

Heni's experiences at the kindergarten have been a way of anchoring her sense of identity, as she lives away from her mana whenua. She laments that she is not connected to a local marae, and cannot serve as a bridge between the kindergarten and local Māori community: "I don't have a marae around here so I can't help you out", affirming the kindergarten's efforts: "You guys do excellent in Māori." She agrees with teacher Carolyn that many Māori in the area share a similar locational transience, explaining her experience of sensitivity to different kawa:

> We moved a lot so I didn't have one foundation. When we moved here this was the foundation that I learnt so going back to my own was way different from here. I had to learn that. Everyone expects me to be instilled, so I was sitting on my own marae thinking that's a bit weird and they look at me and think "What is wrong with her?" I know the Ngāti Awa one. It is very different.
>
> The protocols are different at my home one and these ones are different.

Heni explains how her sense of belonging at this centre has increased as she has appreciated the efforts made by teachers to help her feel welcome and participate alongside the children:

> I feel so comfortable. I used to be a bit stand-offish ... I love it—you always welcome people to stay to look and see your child learn.

Kathryn, another Māori parent at Papamoa Kindergarten, acknowledges her inability as a working parent to always feel fully informed of what is happening for their tamariki at the centre, a dilemma that is acknowledged more widely (Graue, Kroeger, & Prager, 2001).

Towards the end of the study, Carolyn from Papamoa Kindergarten began videotaping tamariki and whānau at the kindergarten. She summarised her video interview with a mother, Rina, as follows:

> Our interview with Rina was special. She is a mother of five children, two of whom had attended Kōhanga Reo. She has worked in early childhood centres. She is sharing her baby with us. She talked about:
>
> - how it is not always something you can see; it is something we feel
> - that it was important to be greeted and welcomed. She said she had an awesome welcome here and she loved the learning being visible
> - her daughter was coming home singing waiata. She said she heard one song for weeks on end
> - she enjoys her daughter sharing what has happened in her day.

- we introduce the legends of our place for example; the three whales and the legend of Mauao
- she said that ECE sets the foundations for learning
- she says that te reo is being picked up and brought home. She comments “for me that is happening and I wouldn’t have it any other way”
- she says that tikanga and kawa procedures are followed correctly and that staff will ask for support.

Rina says, “How can you put up your hand to be a teacher and teach all cultures and not know about a culture and how to teach it without knowing it? People say they haven’t got much te reo and don’t know much about Māori, the little bit that you can give and share is worthy enough”.

Rina’s comment aligns with the work of Lisa Delpit (1995), who quotes the wisdom of a Native Alaskan educator: “In order to teach you, I must know you” (p. 182). Delpit emphasises the importance of teachers learning to critique the cultural lenses through which they filter their understandings:

> We all interpret behaviors, information, and situations through our own cultural lenses; these lenses operate involuntarily, below the level of conscious awareness, making it seem that our own view is simply “the way it is”. Learning to interpret across cultures demands reflecting on our own experiences, analyzing our own culture, examining and comparing varying perspectives. We must consciously and voluntarily make our cultural lenses apparent. Engaging in the hard work of seeing the world as others see it must be a fundamental goal for any move to reform the education of teachers and their assessment. (p. 151)

Feeling a sense of belonging

One of the particular aspects that we had been interested in exploring within this study was the ways in which a diverse range of children and families, including those from tauiwi backgrounds, experienced early childhood programmes reflective of Tiriti-based practice. The scenario of Neil, described earlier (pp. 47–48), was an example whereby the inclusiveness of te reo and tikanga centre programme was embraced by an English child and his mother. Educators did not take for granted that parents would automatically come to this receptiveness, but engaged in dialogical relationships with these families. Pat from Belmont–Te Kupenga described how her conversations with Somalian fathers, explaining the spiritual enactment such as karakia within their centre, had resulted in a respectful mutual understanding:

> I’ve had philosophical discussions with our Somali fathers who say “Allah is God”, and I say well we’re actually not talking to God, we’re actually just thinking about this wonderful world around us. You can make it whatever God you like, because when we do our karakia, “E tō mātou Matua i te Rangi, whakamoemiti ana mātou ki a koe, mō tenei rā”, is how we start the day. I say “We’re just saying ‘hello’ to a higher power, we don’t know what’s out there”. “But Allah is God”. I said, “Let’s just think about these are little children, all we’re doing is greeting the day”, and they back-track and it’s okay, but it’s been an interesting thing to actually handle that. But when they see how gently, kindly and respectfully we treat

> their children, that's what they come to us for, and we have Somali families come to us from one side of town, coming right across town because of the respect we show children and that's more important than trying to discuss and argue and be religious about what we do. I say "We're doing spiritual things to help ourselves feel good".

Carolyn O'Connor from Papamoa had interviewed Sarah and her mother, who are recent immigrants of English and Dutch ancestry:

C: Sarah do you know any Māori song / words/?
S: No
C: Can you say a prayer in Māori?
S: No
C: Do you know Whakapai . . .?
S: I know that one. Whakapai ēnei kai e te Ariki. Āmine (Perfect pronunciation).
C: When do we say this?
S: Thank you for the food. (We say karakia at fruit time)
C: Do you know what Karen is using?
S: Pois.
C: Have you seen people using them before?
S: Yes? (She is off!)

Interview with Sarah's Mum (M):

C: How long have you been in New Zealand?
M: Two years now.
C: When you came to kindergarten - one of our cultural practices is manaakitanga which means making people welcome, happy to be here—did you feel welcomed?
M: Yeh sure.
C: How did you feel welcomed?
M: Just very friendly and open . . .
C: Have you had much exposure to Māori experiences for Sarah?
M: Just a trip to Rotorua, the parks and concerts. Sarah was sitting enjoying the concerts. She was dancing with the pois. That's about it.
C: When you come into this environment do you see things Māori?
M: The days of the week, numbers, decoration. Enough for me to see that it is both.
C: Do you hear much language?
M: I was talking with Sarah and she knows the karakia. She started speaking it at home and I didn't know what it was, I wanted to get her to repeat it for her grandmother through the computer but she didn't want to .
C: Do you think that we could do better from a bicultural perspective?
M: I don't think I can answer that because I don't know enough Māori culture and language. All I know is that it sounds similar—our "a" is same as Māori: "a", "e", "u"—vowels.
C: How do you feel about Sarah learning Māori as she has English and Dutch as well?
M: I think it is awesome.

Carolyn commented:

> Interesting a child from a different country and culture had picked up on ours, being able to say and understand the significance of karakia and seeing links to Māori culture through dance and poi. I felt that seeing we are in quite a transient community with many Māori not in their own iwi, and so many families from overseas settling in this area, it is important to make more obvious our Māori culture, more experiences, marae visits will see children with rich and exciting experiences and networking with whānau maybe. It may well be that the kindergarten is one of the few places that this family has been able to access Māori experiences.

In this, her second interview with an English mother (A), this Maungatapu teacher (T) follows up from some feedback from the co-directors on the previous interview with this parent:

> T: Some of the discussion we had last time was around—and you were really complementary about how the children were very included that you felt it was very inclusive here and there was a nice feeling about the place—I guess some of the feedback has been (and keeping in mind that these two women don't know you but just that the small brief was that you have immigrated here recently) so you were saying your childhood wasn't here and that was the key to it and so one question they were thinking that we could look into some more was that stuff about feeling inclusiveness and that everyone is one. Do you think those are values and beliefs that you have and that you are wanting your child to experience here? And maybe that it's different from what you have experienced as a child and so like how do you see because you have had perhaps a different childhood to what your children are experiencing in a country that is bicultural—how do you view that, how do you see that inclusiveness is working for your family or what parts of it do you like or what parts of it are you not so sure about?
>
> A: I would say that see my childhood was quite different than the English one because we travelled and lived in Papua New Guinea and my parents were very into being inclusive and those are the values that I wanted for my children. England is quite multicultural so I guess I was really wanting to make sure my children are very accepting or included and that they don't be standoffish or are any better than anyone else you know what I mean? So I guess that's a barrier that I've got and I've got very different experiences to my husband whose been raised as in a very typical English working-class family with a very traditional style. I see it as being that life is bigger than that and he does obviously too that we want them to expand and appreciate what they can learn from any culture. Both of them at the moment are on a thing about, "I want to live in England" and that's fine there's lot's of discussions around that and the differences because they do miss out on the family stuff so it's finding other substitutes and kindy and places have given them a sense of family and belonging and you can't ask for more than that, and family may not be for them a traditional family. You don't have to have a blood tie to feel included and that's what we are trying to teach them, you don't have to have a

blood tie to anybody to include them and equally to feel included or valued and I think they get that.

T: That's great that you have consciously thought through that.

A: Well you've got to. There's no point being here and you know coming here has been brilliant for our family but there are sacrifices and you have to make the best of those sacrifices. They find it hugely exciting and they think it's great … I guess that's what I wanted for them in life for them to not feel they are living in a box that there's a big place out there and there's lot's you can get from other people."

T: And something that I pick up from what you are saying is around and I think it's an unconscious thing that we can sometimes carry with us and if we come from a British and I don't what to only label Britain but a heritage that perhaps centuries ago saw themselves as slightly superior and sometimes that kind of tone or attitude can be shifted down through values and beliefs.

A: And I don't want my children to ever feel superior.

T: Of course not. I guess the other side of it is that this is very much a bicultural society that we live in and yes we need to acknowledge that there is multi cultures in New Zealand but New Zealand is essentially bicultural within our government services it's about a bicultural society and like what you are saying it's helping children to recognise the point of difference there that yes peoples are one and have a right to a human right but actually there is a point of difference and actually some people do think differently from others and that's probably something that as a team here we are trying to dig a bit deeper with the children that's it's ok that some people do things differently from other people.

A: When I first came here and I guess I've got more used to it now but I was very confused by bicultural as opposed to multicultural and I found that quite hard at times to say but I understand the concept of two cultures but there's actually more than two. What about being multicultural? I understand the need to be bicultural but not exclusively. I would hate to think that my children didn't recognise other cultures too so I do try to talk to them about other cultures you know try and raise their awareness that it isn't just the two.

T: I guess that comes from the signing of the Treaty being that it was Māori and European but it's a good point.

A: That took a little getting used to. In Britain it was always multi-cultural.

T: So are you feeling more comfortable with it?

A: Yes and I am trying to explain it to my children.

During this in-depth co-theorising discussion, the teacher and mother focus on unpacking some of their understandings around inclusion of cultures, difference, and the tension between recognising Māori as tangata whenua, alongside the dominant Pākehā culture while still acknowledging the diversity of other cultures present in Aotearoa.

Whaea Pera, the teacher from Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten, described how the experience of attending the tangi of Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu with the kindergarten had been a source of learning and insight for an English father, who was moved by this experience to reflect on his Christian religion:

> We were talking and when we were looking at the paepae around the marae and when he walked to the gate he felt this korowai just wrapped around him and inviting him in to the gateway through the doors at Tūrangawaewae. Now he was really overwhelmed by that. I think it gave him a sense of belonging as well, even though he's from a different culture and ethnicity and everything, and then he looked out to the people and then he asked "So what happens when you've gone Pera?" And I said "Well we go back to our family that have gone before." And I said, "Our tinana returns back to Papatūānuku but our wairua is still here and it's always around", and he says to me, "But what if you're good, bad or naughty, what happens there?" and I said "Oh, in the whaikōrero they always talk about 'Hawaiki-nui, Hawaiki-roa, Hawaiki-pamamao', so in my eyes that's where we return to. Our family's waiting for us there and my Mum and Dad will have their arms open wide, 'Haere mai, bubba', you know come to me, and I said it's about family, whanaungatanga, we still end up with them." He says, "I'm going to take this back and I'm going to tell K and I want my family to have the same feeling" and he felt so strong about it … and he wrote us a good kōrero too through his eyes and what helped him in his journey at Tūrangawaewae … and just to hear that kōrero I think that actually broke down a lot of barriers for him.

Pera's colleague Pat appreciatesPera's support in generating within the kindergarten the sense of place as tūrangawaewae, a place of belonging for all members of the wider kindergarten whānau:

> Pat to Pera: One of the things that you've brought is that this is the tūrangawaewae of all the whānau of the children and this becomes their tūrangawaewae. With nowhere else to stand this is one place they can say "Well that's for everybody not just our own family" but it's all the families and that's the precious thing.

Intergenerational involvement

A finding that emerged from many of the centres was the valued presence and contribution of grandmothers within both the early childhood programme and also as research participants. This reaffirmed the valuing of nannies expressed by whānau within a Māori-focused Playcentre in the previous Whakawhanaungatanga study (Ritchie, 2007a; Ritchie & Rau, 2006). In the current study, however, grandmothers of a range of ethnicities were actively involved in their grandchildren's early childhood experiences.

At Papamoa Kindergarten, two grandmothers, Nanna Sue and Lynette, have volunteered for the past three years. Co-researcher Carolyn explains that:

> Lynette helps prepare the kai for our shared morning tea. She will pop in and do the fruit, help clean, spend time with the children and generally be part of the kindergarten culture. She has often been caretaker over the holidays for us as well.

Nanna Sue, a Pākehā grandmother, reported on her first impressions at Papamoa Kindergarten, valuing the sense of affirmation of things Māori for her granddaughter, who has a Māori father:

> I was blown away coming in. I was amazed with the structure of the place. It was like coming into a Polynesian feel, which can be Māori. It just had an ethnic feel and I was blown away by that. The teachers were welcoming, the children, everything was catered for. Everyone was comfortable. I felt there was no distinction, people were valued. There was a family feel. It was professional, but family in the sense the children were embraced with freedom—they were listened to. That in itself is a bicultural thing, it is a blending even though now there is a renaissance of Māori, people are proud to be me, proud to be Māori, the sense that this is their identity. If I was Māori I would be proud to be Māori. And the sense that coming in here people were able to feel that—I got the sense that it was a bicultural environment, the whole feel in the place.

Carolyn asked Nanna Sue why she has stayed at the kindergarten, long after her granddaughter has left to attend school:

> N. S.: Because I love everybody. I love the kids and the teachers and the environment. We are teaching children about themselves, we are learning, and open to learning, we are keen to come on board. We have children that come from different cultures and we celebrate that, with them, we are part of that, even though we are not that, we still celebrate they are taonga, every one is a little treasure, you're a treasure.
>
> C.: We think of you as a valuable person, the children look to you, they know you, you're a role model for them, you're a part of the community and you have a passion for what you do. You are passionate and have a wonderful caring nature for children and people, basically. What you are doing is also volunteering the time that you spend every day is very special.
>
> N.S.: I am glad I'm not paid as it makes a different set of, I don't want that, it comes down to a responsibility, my free will, I like to do it. I just value that I am able to do that and it is an answer to a dream to be able to come back.

Carolyn expresses her appreciation to Nanna Sue for her voluntary contribution and important role within the kindergarten community. For Nanna Sue, her involvement in the kindergarten programme is rewarding in itself, valuing the celebration of both individuals and different cultures that is integral to everyday practice in this centre.

Nana H., interviewed by Ramila Sadikeen of Brooklands Kindergarten, valued the sense of belonging and comfort that had been immediately obvious on her first arrival at the centre:

> The first impressions—it was amazing actually when we came in here apart from what anyone said, it felt like home. Sometimes you go into a house and you don't sit straight because you don't feel quite comfortable and there are other places you go in and you immediately feel comfortable—just like that—he felt at home and that was good … I think the feeling that you belong.

The conversation went on to include a discussion of culture and Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Nana H. appreciated the cultural learnings that she and her grandson H. had accessed through their participation at Brooklands. Shared experiences had included a visit to Parihaka, pōwhiri, and a kindergarten concert which had included a Māori legend and whaikōrero from Māori elders.

> N.H.: This sort of thing that H. is learning now and so it's not going to be like "They do that", it's going to be, "*We* do that"—it's going to be "This is what *we* do". That's what I am sort of hoping for him. When I started school we were just taught the curriculum and there was no culture really—none of ours and nothing about the Māori culture, nothing. It's only not that many years ago they started bringing up the Treaty of Waitangi which I don't think is sorted out. Until they did that none of us really learnt anything.
>
> R: So are you aware of the Treaty of Waitangi now and what do you think about it?
>
> N.H.: I can never really understand why it has been left sort of in the dark when there are so many people who did not know that it existed. Once you get into it and read through it, these sorts of things should have been done many, many years ago.
>
> R: So when you understood it are you saying that all of us have part to play ?
>
> N.H.: Definitely! In it we are all important.
>
> R: Obviously you are saying that the Treaty of Waitangi is significant in terms of acknowledging Māori and it is imperative in doing that—is that what you are feeling?
>
> N.H.: My feeling is that it is a partnership and we are in there and we are equally partners and we have got to accept each other to stop the trampling of it some time yet but with what is happening nowadays it will come through the generations and you could see it starting and if you had the right sort of people it will just flourish, you know, people who are prepared to live and change as they live.

Nana H. reflects on her own generation's lack of awareness of cultural issues, valuing the alternative construct now available from their involvement within Brooklands' programme. Her comments indicate that she is now viewing these matters as part of a positive transformative process within a wider context of the current era of reconciliation of the historical devaluing of kaupapa Māori within education and elsewhere. The kaupapa Māori experiences generated by the proactivity of Ramila and her team, inclusively embracing the participation of whānau whānui (wider family) of enrolled children in visiting significant local Māori people and places, can be seen also as a community-level transformation of Tiriti-based enactment (Ritchie, 2007b).

Educator enactment of Tiriti-based practice

Early childhood educators in Aotearoa are privileged in that we work under the auspices of a Tiriti-based curriculum, *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996b), which is unique in its honouring of the dignity and diversity of children and their whānau/families, recognising the interrelationships between children's cultural values, knowledges, and learning validated as being integral to our collective wellbeing:

> Children's learning and development are fostered if the well-being of their family and community is supported; if their family, culture, knowledge and community are respected; and if there is a strong connection and consistency among all the aspects of the child's world. The curriculum builds on what children bring to it and makes links with the everyday activities and special events of families, whānau, local communities, and cultures. Different cultures have different child-rearing patterns, beliefs, and traditions and may place value on different knowledge, skills, and attitudes. Culturally appropriate ways of communicating should be fostered, and participation in the early childhood education programme by whānau, parents, extended family, and elders in the community should be encouraged. (Ministry of Education, 1996b, p. 42)

As Carlina Rinaldi (2006) has signalled, wellbeing should be viewed through a collective rather than individualistic lens, recognising our inter-connectedness within communities, across cultures, and as planetary citizens. Whanaungatanga is the Māori construct that incorporates these ideas of collective wellbeing (M. H. Durie, 1997; Pere, 1982; G. H. Smith, 1995). The Tuhoe[4] model of whanaungatanga, as outlined by Rangimarie Rose Pere (1982), emphasises the components of aroha. Pere defines aroha as the commitment of people related though common ancestry; loyalty; obligation; an inbuilt support system; stability; self sufficiency; and spiritual protection. Graham Smith (1995) has observed that contemporary Māori constructions of whānau, although not necessarily kinship-based, retain traditional values such as; manaakitanga (sharing and caring); aroha (respect); whakaiti (humility); and tuakana/teina (older children caring for younger). Whanaungatanga is highlighted within *Te Whāriki* as an important aspect of early childhood practice:

> New Zealand is the home of Māori language and culture: curriculum in early childhood settings should promote Te reo and ngā tikanga Māori, making them visible and affirming their value for children from all cultural backgrounds. Adults working with children should demonstrate an understanding of the different iwi and the meaning of whānau and whanaungatanga. (Ministry of Education, 1996b, p. 42)

Rinaldi's notion of collective wellbeing recognises that this wellbeing is sustained by educators' capacity to initiate and sustain relationships within the collective. Integral to this process is:

> the quality of communication between the parties, on the knowledge and awareness they have of their mutual needs and enjoyment, and the opportunities for encounter and gradual development that arise in an integrated system of communicative experiences. (2006, p.51)

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[4] Tuhoe are an iwi, a tribe, of the Urewera area in the North Island.

Enacting whanaungatanga

Following from the explorations of enactment in our previous TLRI study, the Whakawhanaungatanga project (Ritchie & Rau, 2006), enactment of whanaungatanga was evident through the current data. This enactment by teachers was more than merely a response to a professional requirement, such as those stated in the Desirable Objectives and Practices (Ministry of Education, 1996b, 1998). For educators in this project, their enactment was an "ahua" or way of being, a frame in which it is unnecessary to create an artificial separation between their personal and their professional philosophies and dispositions.

Marion Dekker from Maungatapu Kindergarten shared the following:

> An interesting comment that one of our Pākehā mothers through the interview was saying how wonderful and warm and welcoming and inclusive the place was and she said, "Tell me is that because you are trying really strongly to deliver a bicultural programme here in this kindergarten, or is that because it's *you* guys?" And we found it interesting to stop and think—"Okay, now is this about our personalities? Is this *who we are*?" and after lots of discussion I was excited and kind of encouraged to be able to say to the team, "Yes there's an openness there and that openness people recognise as an embracing and that actually we want to know who you are, we want to share who you are and this is *who we are*." Yes it's kind of a dovetailing of a person who's growing and is open and is understanding and is inclusive, but it's also that person has embraced an understanding and is trying to represent that in a way that is visible not only on the walls, but is visible in life. Actually it's not about who I am, it's because *I'm committed* to delivering that, and so I will behave like this to do that and I will reflect like this to do that and that's what the spin-off has been in our team is that when we're looking at self-review on any aspect of the programme or the routines or the happenings or what's happening in the kindergarten and all aspects of it, it is now a question that's always asked: "How will this impact on Māori? How will this impact on how we will deliver this? What will we need to say about that?" And I'm not saying that we're good at that yet, but I'm excited to say that actually now my team think about that and so I think that's been a shift for us, and I have seen growth in the way the team welcome new Māori families that come into kindergarten, and so that's really encouraging for me to see, because they are growing…

Marion's gentle leadership style had modelled to her team this integration of committed philosophy into practice. The growth that Marion sees within her teaching team has resonance with Clandinin and Connelly's (2000, p. 85) assertion that "Enhancing personal and social growth is one of the purposes of narrative enquiry".

For Pat and Pera, teachers at Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten, whanaungatanga is a way of life, as Pat reported:

> Whanaungatanga is something that happens in our centre all the time and some people would come in and think, "Heck, what's happening here?" There's so many people around, there's so many babies and toddlers coming and going, there's always kai (laughter). One Māori Dad, who is quite worldly-wise came and he said, "Hey, it's like a marae in here!" It's not all the time, but it's about we're always prepared to welcome people and to feed people and to be flexible in what's happening in the programme with the children.

Central to enactment of whanaungatanga is manaakitanga, the nurturing of those present. For Pat and Pera, sharing kai is central to their daily rituals:

> Let's see, our food is an interesting one too. Lunch boxes: totally out, won't have them near the place (laughter), but what we do is we have an incredible range of socio-economic situations. A lot of really poor families, so we have donations of fruit, everyone brings fruit, every week and it goes in the communal basket and it's on the kai table in a container with the lid on it and tongs, and children get a plate and they use tongs. And the morning children can make themselves a sandwich, so we ask for donations of bread and spreads. On a Monday and Friday we're there longer so we have sandwich, popcorn and fruit day, and Fridays we make pizza with the children—we have pizza and fruit. And so all the time we're sharing kai together, we're enjoying each other's company. There's always an excuse to bake and make something. We're never short of food. And those families who can donate the bread and spreads do. Those who can't, don't. No-one's asking, no-one's counting, no-one's noticing. It's about people feeling comfortable.

Through this enactment of whanaungatanga, the educators in this study were able to gain access to local knowledges. At Belmont–Te Kupenga, a kuia (R) who has a longstanding involvement in the kindergarten, has mentored the teachers along their journey, both supporting and challenging their growth in enactment of their commitment:

> One of our grandmas, R., very close to Tainui, her whānau are the Kingmakers, and she's our mentor and guide because when her grandson first came to us she said, "I need to talk to you, we need to have a meeting", and we sat down together and she said, "I have this project I want you to work on—it's called whanaungatanga", and I said, "Yes, we would love you to work with us on this project". And I said, "If you turn around [our kindergarten philosophy] is up on the wall there, above our family tree", and she said, "Oh good", and she brought a whole of books from the library that she'd gone and collected herself … kids books, and she showed them to us and I said, "Oh those are so lovely, can I show you what we've got?", and we had all the same books that she'd brought, and she said, "Oh fantastic, I didn't know you had these", so she was making sure that her mokopuna was going to be looked after and that the resources were there for her boy because she wanted her boy to have that, and so we've been working closely with her sharing all the time about what it is that we're doing.
>
> And she says, "What are you doing about Māori language week?", and Pera said "What we're doing is everyday in this kindergarten is Māori language week, we're not doing anything especially different, we just keep feeding it in, feeding it in, because we don't ever stop doing that, but yes, we understand yes there's Māori language week and we'll make sure we'll do something more about it".

Under R.'s guidance, the kindergarten attended the unveiling of Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu, and are now proceeding with plans to make a whāriki from flax growing in the kindergarten grounds.

At Papamoa Kindergarten, a tangible sense of wairua is present both in the essence of the aesthetics of the environment, and the warmth of the relationships, as noted by Carolyn in her final report:

> I think most importantly in our kindergarten tamariki and whānau respond to the manaakitanga that they can feel. Our place has a wairua that is very precious and comes from relationships that teachers from the past and present have developed and strengthened. We have the responsibility of educating very important taonga and they are developing on many different levels through the body, spirit, mind and family (A. Durie, 1997).

At Papamoa Kindergarten local legend has been honoured in the creation of a mosaic in the floor of the front entrance, representing the three whales of this legend of Mangatawa (Figure 5).

Figure 5 **Three whales mosaic, Papamoa Kindergarten**

Nadine Wishnowsky, of the Thames Valley Coromandel Playcentre Association, reported how the presence of fisher folk fathers at a Playcentre outing had enriched the children's experiences:

> We used to quite often pack up the session and head to the beach. Just a normal part of what we did. I remember one day a few of the fathers came. They're all fishermen, and they were under the rocks for the kids and pulling out all these fish, we didn't know lived there. They were amazing. They were so cool to have. It's good to have those people from the community involved in the kids learning. Local knowledge.

Nadine, however, had observed that for many Playcentres, the commitment to the "free play" philosophy was an obstacle to enacting such rituals around manaakitanga, sharing kai, and coming together as a collective with a shared sense of community:

> So those rituals and milestones are a difficulty in Playcentre because of the “free play” philosophy. So especially around things Māori where everybody sits down together and they karakia and they eat together and there are certain times that you do things together. Gets actually quite lost in Playcentre and while I like the “free play” philosophy I can see that that’s a huge cultural clash … that “free play” philosophy though means that there’s no structure. There’s no mat time, there’s no gathering time . . .

This raises the challenge for all of us in terms of our agency as educators, our responsibility in critiquing such iconic “institutions” as that of the notion of “free play” and emergent curriculum, and our proactivity and modelling within our own practice.

Teacher proactivity and modelling

Our educator co-researchers were proactive in many ways, seeking support and opportunities to further their understandings through participation in professional learning opportunities, reading, academic study, and courses in te reo, as well as their disposition of welcoming and open-mindedness to opportunities to learn from whānau. Co-researcher Marion Dekker commented that “Probably for early childhood we’ve been really fortunate to have very strong academic models that have really attuned themselves to Māori pedagogy and so that has filtered through how we deliver things just in our approach with children”. Educators demonstrated their commitment to honouring Māori knowledges by actively promoting these understandings among the children.

A Playcentre supervisor, Delia, interviewed for the project by Nadine Wishnowsky, described how, as a result of taking on board her learnings from her professional qualification, she took responsibility to oversee Playcentre protocols, as outlined in the guiding document *Whānau Tupu Ngātahi* (Working Party on Cultural Issues, Rōpū Hanga Tikanga, 1990). Delia frequently experienced situations where she needed to remind parents to respect tikanga such as not playing with food:

> D: Within Playcentre we've always gone through and worked in partnership with Māori and looking at bicultural issues. One of the major books that we look at and work with is the ... I can't remember what it's called!
>
> N: Whānau Tupu Ngātahi.
>
> D: That’s right. It's been a while since I read that, but that has quite an impact on Playcentre and how we approach things. We’re always having to remind people, like I did yesterday, about the use of food in play. Somebody had heard that if you use a bottle of coke and put a lolly in it that it explodes so they were going to do it. So I said it's not quite appropriate to do it within our setting. And they also mentioned about making pasta necklaces and things like that.
>
> N: How did that go down?

D: They said they would miss that, they enjoyed doing it but they respected that within early childhood and within Playcentre it was inappropriate. So its just explaining to people coming in all the time things like this. Some people find it quite hard.

Delia accepts her responsibility to maintain vigilance with regard to tikanga, respectfully informing and reminding parents who appear to be unaware of these matters.

Karakia play an important part in Māori daily ritual, their enactment ensuring the spiritual wellbeing of the collective. Karakia, meaningfully enacted, invoke the mauri and wairua, the interconnectedness of people with their ancestors and their specific environmental context, engendering a sense of spiritual safety, identity, belonging, and wellbeing for the people concerned. The practice of karakia provides a vehicle for early childhood programmes to integrally reflect and resonate these concepts (Ritchie, in press).

In a story of a karakia for a dead bird, from Papamoa Kindergarten, Julie Sullivan initiates the tikanga of karakia as appropriate for the occasion:

> **6 November 2007**
> The children found a dead bird in our native garden area. They talked about what to do with it and decided it needed to be buried in that garden. Julie asked if we need to say karakia. They said yes and someone went off to get Rina. She came back and by that time the children were holding hands in a circle. Many of them bent their heads while karakia was being said. At mat time Kerryn asked the children about what had occurred out in the garden. One boy says "What we say was like 'Kia ora'" and another says "karakia". At this same mat time Kerryn introduces our new child from India. They talked about how he could not speak English. One boy said, "It sounds like Māori".

In previous research (Ritchie, 1999, 2002), educators were observed attempting to incorporate the Māori language such as colours and numbers without any contingency to Māori knowledges or tikanga. This was not the case in the present study, where the use of te reo was integral with tikanga. Carolyn O'Connor, from Papamoa Kindergarten, commented that the integration of te reo is important but equally important is that the "children understand its concepts and contexts too". The respect that these teachers emulate towards the Māori language and culture is applied to other cultures present in the centre, children proffering positive recognition of difference. Children who have learnt this respectful orientation may well be considered to be "fuller human beings for having access to multiple expressions of reality, and be better prepared to deal with the complexities of a shifting, shrinking world" (Delpit & Dowdy, 2002, p. 204).

Teachers are aware of their role in mentoring not only children, but their whānau into discourses inclusive and honouring of reo and tikanga. Pat Leyland and her colleague Pera Paekau, of Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten, take these responsibilities very seriously, as Pat explained:

> We practice simple tikanga because we're working with children. People say, "What about tikanga, what about tikanga?" "Tikanga" is the biggest concept I've ever come across, it scares the hell out of me, and I only know that much—nothing—you know so small. So we practice with children simple stuff. Pera is Tainui and if she doesn't get it right she's in big trouble so we keep everything simple. Everyday we have what we call hui-time. We get

> together and do karakia, hīmene, but we're always singing simple things, the same things because the flow of families is in and out and because we are "ngā hau e wha", we come from the four winds. We actually just tread quietly and gently and don't scare our Pākehā families. But as a Pākehā I can be a good role model for our Pākehā families and show them it's not scary, it can be done, it's fabulous. And I say to them, "Whanaungatanga is something that is universal. You don't have to be Māori to practice whanaungatanga. It's just a fabulous concept. We can all be there for each other".

The team from Richard Hudson Kindergarten, Susan Greig, Grace Olinga-Manins, and Adele Ellwood, supported by research facilitator and senior teacher Lee Blackie, contributed several narratives which exemplify the ideas of teacher proactivity and modelling, their shared journey celebrating a kindergarten community honouring and inclusive of not only Māori, but of diversity, seen in their inclusive use of sign language:

> Our bicultural programme is fully integrated into RHK life. We teach sign language alongside te reo and it is a wonderful way for children to learn te reo. Often if no one can remember the kupu we are asking, then we do the sign and it triggers the kupu! We tend to have a waiata that sticks as our signature song and for a long time it was "Tohorā Nui". Now our party piece is "Tūtira Mai" with an extra loud "AUE". We sang it to the Otago rugby team and at the Māori and Pacific Island Festival and at the senior teachers' hui back in March—it makes people laugh (and we didn't teach them to sing it so loud). These tamariki are experiencing a bicultural education that is normal. WE ARE PROUDLY BICULTURAL.

Here is an excerpt from their narratives reflecting on the progress of the Richard Hudson Kindergarten kapahaka:

> The children and teachers of Richard Hudson Kindergarten have been learning haka from Matua Paul. We have had approximately six 10 minute sessions where we have been learning a haka to welcome visitors and a haka to honour someone special. The children (and teachers) are responding very positively and enthusiastically.
>
> We informed our whānau by newsletter that we were hoping to learn haka and invited feedback on possible tikanga restrictions. No feedback at all was received, so we have gone ahead.
>
> The four children in the Te Puawaitanga study (Spiro, Kiyana, Izaak, and Jakob) have all responded positively to the introduction of haka. Izaak only got one session before he left for school, but the other three tamariki have participated fully and have been awesome role models to the other children.
>
> In interviewing Spiro, Kiyana and Jakob about learning haka, they have all indicated enjoyment of haka (Spiro—likes mostly everything about it, Kiyana—I like haka, it's really good). When asked what they like, all three said it is Toia Mai that they like the best. All of them have seen haka elsewhere (Spiro—at my sister's school, Kiyana—with Mum somewhere and on tele, Jakob—My Dad does haka with his friends, Izaak—at the rugby).
>
> It seems that these children are naturally attracted to things Māori, such as haka. Is it their wairua connecting them to their tipuna? The attraction seems so spontaneous and genuine, so genetically innate. We believe that exposing them to Te Ao Māori at kindergarten is

> providing a vital link for them to their cultures, especially for those who are not living a Māori life at home, who only get things Māori on special occasions at their marae or elsewhere in the community. Kindergarten is a regular chance for them to embrace and practice being Māori. Being and/or acting Māori is celebrated here. And their mana just grows and grows.
>
> We also know this is our responsibility to continually build on things Māori in our treaty-based teaching and learning pedagogical design. While we consulted as a means to inform and if need be respond (and negotiate) to parent and whānau concerns or challenges we were united in our intent to ignite, inspire and have children and families desire more aspects of te reo me tikanga.

In consulting with families/whānau, these teachers show awareness of and sensitivity towards possible resistance or uncertainties that might have been present in their parent community. However, it appears from the lack of concern that their previous work in generating a climate of shared understanding about their centre commitment to inclusion means that they are trusted to proceed in their enactment. Grace from Richard Hudson begins a narrative of Kiyana's enjoyment of te reo, in August 2006:

> I told Kiyana that I would like to have a little chat with her and she said "Kōrero" and I said "Yes a kōrero". I knew that she understood more than she was actually able to say in Māori. So I said "Kiyana, if I say 'Haere mai', what do I mean?" She signed and said "Come". Then I said "What about 'Kei te pehea koe?'" Kiyana did not say what it meant, but she replied "Kei te pai" and gave me the thumbs up.

The team later reflected:

> We believe that commitment and daily practice of integrating te reo and tikanga Māori is very visible and supports our kaupapa—through Kiyana's keen response to new kupu when she is excited to transfer this to home—this is the principle whānau tangata in action, it also shows the tuakana–teina strategy where she is the competent person sharing new info with others and helping them to this competency. We also celebrate the concept of ako, where the role of teaching and learning is reciprocal, Kiyana is the teacher with the new kupu. This further supports the information originally sent about the interview with Kiyana's parents (Warren and Kelly, 25 May) where Warren is feeling affirmed as a generation who missed the opportunity to live and learn his native tongue, his excitement and celebration of Kiyana's new learning is welcomed and implemented into their family context. We see him as proud and willing to learn alongside his daughter, who is actively participating in reo in the kindergarten context.
>
> We believe this is non-threatening for Warren because we as teachers are non-Māori but supported by Māori resource teachers, so again the community of learners is embraced and practiced without anyone feeling whakamā. We also believe that the principle ngā hononga/relationships has been a key to this success, we have a relaxed and friendly relationship with this family which has enabled a non-threatening approach to building on reo together.

> Kiyana constantly seeks new kupu to stretch and challenge her learning, this we view as self-assessment and is key to intrinsic motivation to build on her competence and confidence, knowing that she is a learner.
>
> We know that she is proud of these accomplishments and know that the principle of whakamana is also enacted in our daily practice for her to demonstrate this. Seeing Kiyana with this thirst for challenge and extension is like "life-blood" to teachers who are also keen to keep passionate about delivering on a treaty-based curriculum. We believe that this reflects that Kiyana feels valued with her learning, we take her seriously and she knows this, when we don't know the answer we are honest and say "I don't know" and together we are researching, often off to pukapuka or rorohiko. We see the glee in her eye when she asks us questions we don't know the answer to—authenticity is alive in our practice.

The Richard Hudson Kindergarten team celebrate their joy in fostering Kiyana's journey of discovery of te reo, which is being shared with her family, and is of particular significance to Kiyana's father Warren, who was unable to access te reo in his earlier life. This could be viewed as a powerfully transformative shared journey, as the educators' proactive encouragement has enabled this family to a reaffirmed accessing of the taonga of te reo, previously unavailable to several generations due to the education policies of the colonial era (Skerrett, 2007; Walker, 2004).

The team at Hawera Kindergarten highlighted their kindergarten collective identity and position, as reflected in a large noticeboard adorned with images of many of the local marae, along with photos of children and their whakapapa making links to these marae (Figure 6).

Figure 6 **"Us and our place"—Hawera Kindergarten: Whakapapa, marae, the children's whare and whānau**

Research co-director Cheryl Rau facilitated a co-theorising discussion of the significance of this display with Judith and Joy from Hawera:

> Joy: It's like the core of your family, the images of the marae on the wall transcend energy, light energy, they make you feel like you belong. Even though the marae are a few kilometres away or close, it's the wairua, it's the wairua I carry within that connects to those marae. It's the same as the mountain, when I look at the mountain and it's covered in cloud, there is a teaching in that. The waters that flow from that mountain provide sustenance for families. It provides a living energy, the maunga is a tupuna, he also is our life force. I feel my son's presence in the atmosphere, the mountain, the breeze. It's like a trigger, I know about it. I don't know why I know, it is innate.

> Judith: I whakapapa directly. The marae are my ancestors, there is history, stories, and our people are still there. When I look at the pictures alone I think "Who did I last see there?", my childhood memories resurface, reflecting all the good things and not so good things that I would have thought as a child.

> Joy: Marae bring you together as a whānau. These are your Aunties. People find you as well. They came looking for me, as my grandmother's daughter. It links faces back to the past, having been away for so long, the fires haven't gone out. I am

still acknowledged through whakapapa. It's still my tūrangawaewae—it's a given.

Cheryl: What's the learning for the tamariki?

Judith: They see us valuing Māori, marae. They see us placing value on relationships. The detail is important: "This is Aunty's niece, or Nanny's moko". It's not about self- it is about what surrounds us. We don't have pictures of ourselves, we have pictures of the mountain and our marae, our tribal links, our friends and families. The children also bring what they know to kindergarten. Through the photos they share their Māoritanga with us. One little girl I didn't know was Māori tells us her stories shared from her father about his whakakapa. Her pronunciation is beautiful. She is fair with red hair—not visibly Māori. It's a reciprocal growing through parents, child and centre. They bring it here and they can see it here. It's because of the cues. We value our environment—we choose to put them there. It's affirmed what we have known, our confidence has really grown, for ourselves—we do it for the children but it's given a lot to ourselves. The whole team went on a research journey. It's not about what we say we do, but how we celebrate it.

Integral to a Māori paradigm is whakapapa which stories our existence, giving us insights into Māori beginnings. Andrea Morrison (1999, as cited in Pihama, Smith, Taki & Lee, 2004, p. 25) writes:

> Whakapapa links Māori as descendants of Papatūānuku (mother earth) and Ranginui (sky father) and records an intimate link for Māori with the earth and the physical world. We can be linked through whakapapa in the varying relationships of whānau, hapū and iwi to the landscape of tribal areas, specifically to mountains, rivers, lakes and sea. Whakapapa also means that a person's ancestors populate space through historical time and present time.

As Vanessa Paki (2007) has written, the notion of whakapapa reflects "the interconnectivity between people, nature, and the woven universe" (p. 16).

Māori women at the cutting edge

The early childhood interface in settings other than kaupapa Māori/Māori medium can be problematic in terms of Māori women's enactment, political knowing, and strategising necessary tools in confronting anti-colonial constructs (Rau, 2007). Vikki Sonnenberg, formerly a kindergarten kaiako, is adamant that Te Ao Māori values need to be upheld by the early childhood community, her reference to Tiriti-based partnership reflective of her perception that both parties are needing to shift beyond a monocultural lens: "If there is not an understanding or respect for our Māori concepts then there can't be a true genuine reciprocal relationship. How can there be, when one partner doesn't understand the significance of truly knowing someone else's culture?"

Rina, a Māori educator from Papamoa Kindergarten, highlights the relevance of being open to senses such as emotion and intuition, rather than being totally reliant on visual cues. In her heartfelt responsiveness to the energies of aroha and goodwill resonating within the centre, Rina is

acknowledging intangible qualities as integral to being. Her articulated affirmation of the teachers within the kindergarten for their proactive stance towards generating a curriculum that upholds Māori ways of knowing, doing, and being is particularly significant. Rina's questions challenge all those teachers who have limited Te Ao Māori knowledge to deepen their understandings in order to affirm tamaiti/whānau Māori at the early childhood interface and in so doing be more predisposed to making a difference in quality learning outcomes for tamariki Māori. Rina affirms the practice of her Pākehā colleagues at Papamoa Kindergarten:

> It's not always about what you see—it's about what you feel. I think you are doing a great job. I think particularly for our Māori children here. I mean how can put your hand up to be a teacher and teach all cultures and not know about a culture? How can you teach it without knowing it?

Wāhine Māori kaiako positionality across the early childhood sector is one which requires an inner personal and professional strength, Māori women educators not easily able to access a Māori critical mass cohort of support. Māori women teachers face complexities based on being women of colour (hooks, 1984). Vikki, in voicing the comfortableness embedded in cultural connectedness between whānau Māori and tangata Pasifika, and reiterating the relevance of "kanohi ki te kanohi", a face seen is a face known, is proffering a language of possibility that can be derived from our knowing and being (Mead, 1996, p. 66). Vikki considers that, "For whānau Māori, for tangata Pasifika, it makes a difference to see Māori faces. For whānau Pākehā it gives them the richness of a Māori relationship". Māori women constantly navigate at the cutting edge of early childhood education, inspired by a commitment to honour the rights of tamariki and whānau Māori. Māori educator co-researchers within this study affirmed the commitment and efforts of their non-Māori colleagues, recognising the challenges for educators with monocultural backgrounds. Comments included: "I take my hat off to them for the way they'd done it. They did it in their own way. It can't have been easy. We learnt so much from our co-researchers…"

Mourning our Queen

During the period of this study, 2006–2007, our nation mourned the loss of Te Arikinui DameTe Atairangikaahu. Educators, children and their whānau/families were touched by this event. An example of teacher proactivity was the introduction of kaupapa during mat time discussions, such as this one, recorded by Maungatapu Kindergarten teachers:

> T: Something special has been happening on the news on TV that is very sad but very special for Māori people. Does anyone know what has been happening?
>
> C: The Māori Queen died. I just knew 'cos Josh told me that the Māori Queen died.
>
> T: Tino pai and that was really, really sad as, you know what? She was a fantastic lady and she was fantastic for the Māori people because she brought everyone together like one big group like a team so they are really going to miss her and it was a really special day for the Māori people.
>
> C: The Māori lady made, the Queen made another lady to get all her people to help.

T: Yes she did and I wonder is there going to be a new Queen or is there going to be a King?

C: A King. Both of them and a new Queen.

T: The Māori Queen has a son, her oldest son, and he's going to be the new Māori King. I was just thinking I noticed on the TV there was something special about where she was living. Did anyone remember what her house looked like?

C: It was like at my brother's school.

T: I think maybe they had a special time when they came together to remember Te Ata but did anyone remember when they looked at the TV did they see anything special about where she was living?

C: I know about Queens and Kings. Kings and Queens live in castles.

T: Some live in castles but do you know where Dame Te Ata lived? We could see all the Māori people standing together but behind them I could see something that looked a little bit like… (points to kindergarten wharenui).

C: Different.

T: It was a bit different but look she's giving you a good clue.

C: Marae.

T: A marae that they lived on and on that marae there was a house a special house that they lived in. It was a little bit like our—what's the name of our beautiful building that we have made here?

C: A wharenui.

T: Well done and what happens in the wharenui then I wonder?

C: You take your shoes off.

T: You do and why do you take your shoes off?

C: 'Cos you might get dirty feet. Get the wharenui dirty, it might make it dirty. You might have muddy feet.

T: What do you think they might do in a wharenui? Have you been to a wharenui, J.?

C: It wasn't a real one it was only at the museum.

T: What did it look like?

C: It was really cold.

T: It was quite cold was it? What did you see in the wharenui?

C: Carvings. Māori carvings.

In this transcript, we saw the teacher firstly drawing the children's attention to the significant event of the death of Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu. She then makes links to the wharenui that has been constructed at the kindergarten, and encourages children to reflect on tikanga and their own experiences of wharenui.

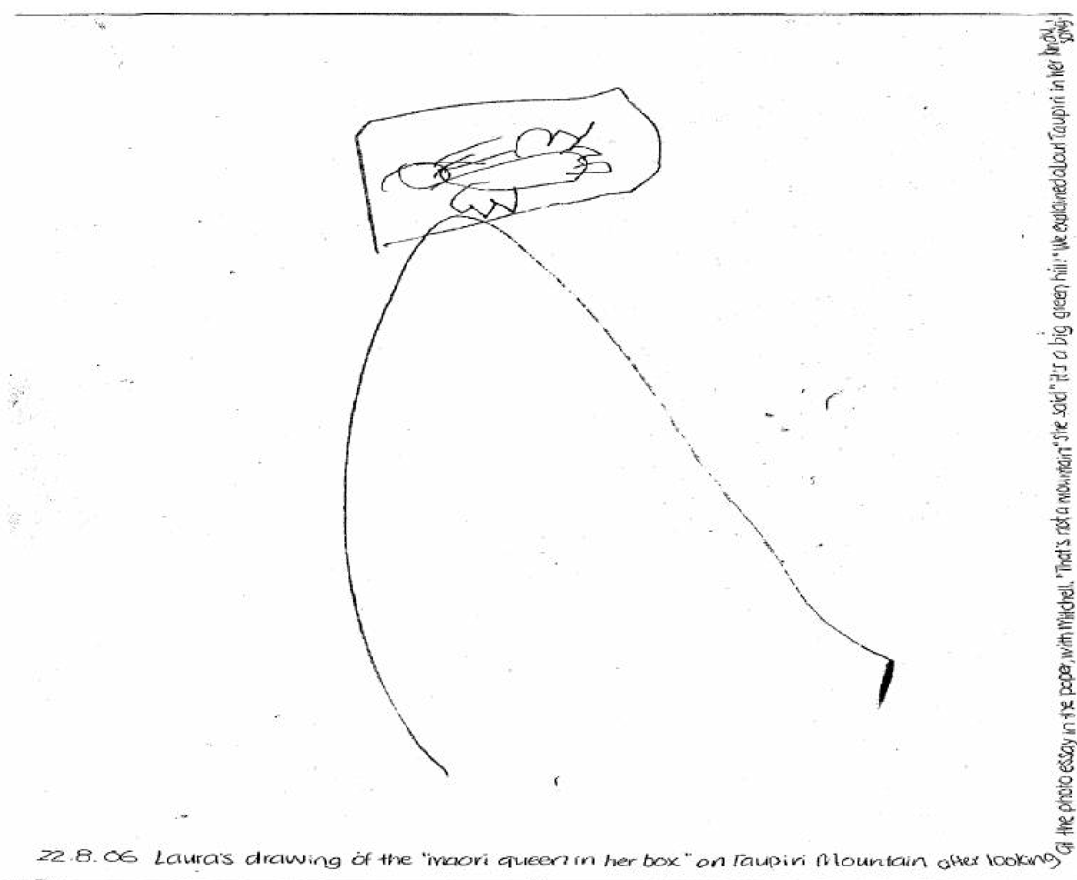
Galbraith Kindergarten attended the tangi and documented the event by creating a book:

> Today our Tamariki had a wonderful discussion about the Māori Queen, Dame Te Atairangikaahu. We talked about her and the tangi and what our children had learned about the Māori Queen and the protocol surrounding her tangi. Our tamariki had the opportunity of being at the centre of it all and for some it was the first time they had experienced a tangi. This was an amazing experience for all of us and may be the only opportunity our tamariki ever have of being at a tangi of this magnitude and importance. To honour Dame Te Atairangikaahu's memory we made a book of all the newspaper cuttings that children had brought in to kindergarten. Our Friday morning children cut out the clippings and glued them on to cardboard which we laminated.

Pera Paekau and Pat Leyland from Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten described how they supported each other and their kindergarten whānau through this period:

> Pat: I guess it goes back to when Te Arikinui Te Atairangikaahu died and Pera had to be out at Tūrangawaewae as part of your whole whānau, iwi commitments and the way you do things. She was out there, I was here to keep the home fires burning, and we were both doing important jobs. Every day we would dedicate our karakia to Te Atairangikaahu and to Pera, because we missed her, and every day we would talk about what Pera was doing out there and why it was important, and when she came back she could tell us about what did happen. And you sang karanga for us and some of the things that happened for the waka, all those things you did actually in a loud strong voice, and I reckon since that happening you've used the reo more and more in the centre. And I think I remember you saying that that was one of the things that gave you so much strength was that whole week of the tangi, and from there the book was made with all the pictures and the children's words. I think, Jenny, that was the most exceptional thing was what the children said. And four-year-olds saying something like "The Māori Queen died and she was like the rain and the wind". That is very, very strong and so even while Pera was away everyday we had newspaper cuttings on the board and children would stand there or sit there and talk about what was happening and why people were crying and then they'd talk about their Grandmas or Granddads who died and their dogs who died and pets and I think it helped them understand what it meant for someone to die. And the parents were involved with the conversations and would come and talk about what the children were saying at home to what was happening there as well.
>
> Pera: Pākehā Mums would come and tell us about what their children were talking about at home. Children were drawing pictures at home and one of our Mums wrote little snippets about, "She would love to be Māori" and why she was envious of people who were Māori and the connections that they had (Figure 7)

Figure 7 **Laura's drawing of the "Māori Queen in her box" on Taupiri Mountain**



Pat: So this year, as the anniversary was starting to come along, Whaea R. said to us "what are you doing about the anniversary?" So we showed her the pictures and she advised us to put them up. So she went and talked to her Ngāti Haua Aunty who's in her 80s, about the whanaungatanga here and the manaakitanga here and Aunty came back with, 'Do they want to come to Tūrangawaewae'? and so we said yes. And we were going to go on the Friday when the motu went, and then the message came back, "No you're coming with Tainui—you're Tainui". And so we went with Tainui on that Thursday.

Pera: Yes that was a real special event in our lives, especially for Tainui—for Waikato, and being a part of it was a great event, and to see The Lady for the last time going down the river, was really when we were all kind of let go, and it was beautiful and to come home and to share it with Pat, the tamariki, with the parents, because they all just wanted to know so much more about what was happening. And then going out to The Lady's unveiling out at Waahi and practicing our mini- pōwhiri—so Pat and I had a group and that was the manuhiri and we were the tangata whenua and lined up our tamariki we were doing 'Hei runga, hei raro' and then I was karanga-ing them on and Pat was calling out, and the tamariki were actually doing the whaikōrero so it was all real for them; what we were doing they saw on that day when we went down,

and even the hariru and hongi, we had to practice that just in case we had to do it, and then we all did waiata after we did our whaikōrero. But for our tamariki to know their roles and responsibilities was just an exception to see.

Pat: And then we went to Tūrangawaewae, we were waiting outside on River Road and then just before we went in they started the 'HEI RUNGA, HEI RARO' and two of the boys I was with, their ears pricked up and "That's what Pera said", so it was familiar, and so when they went on everyone was very calm, very peaceful, they weren't confused. They just followed the grown-ups and sat on chairs and listened and when they got restless we gave them little bags of goodies…We were a mixed bunch. We were a few Māori and mostly Pākehā, so we kind of stood out a bit because we were very white. Not everybody came so that the people were the ones who wanted to come and the other thing was we'd actually taught them what to do or talk to them about what they were doing; we had the display about the marae over there, and people could see what was happening, and so they were prepared.

Pera: And the thing about it, I'd like to acknowledge the parents, they all wore the black kākahu, you know to show respect . . . and it was just beautiful how they just got together as a whānau and we went and it was quietly done, and our tamariki were just . . .

Pat: Beautiful. And they were calm, they were very peaceful. No one was running around screaming; they were laughing and talking to each other—but totally at ease. What was also special was our Whaea brought along her daughter and the two of them sat and talked to our Mums about what it meant and I think that's what they needed to hear was what was going on, what were people saying, what was the procedure, because they were sitting there seeing the whole thing—it's all very well to talk about it at a distance, but when you're right there it's also comforting to have people saying what's happening—reassuring. Whaea was helping us and guiding us all the while and just reminding us gently all the time, "This is what you need to do." She was our kaitiaki and it certainly showed in how the parents responded and she would sit and talk to the Mums and explain things to them before, during and after, so this is how it could happen because we had the support and all this aroha just given to us very gently and very lovingly.

Shared journeying

Shared commitment, long-standing relationships, and continuity amongst educator teams were elements that were salient in this study. Nadine Wishnowsky had reflected on this with Delia, a Playcentre supervisor, with regard to the Playcentre context:

> We talked about it yesterday Delia and I, we've got ERO here. There is a difference [with regard to the degree of Māori content] between centres with supervisors, and ones without. The ones with supervisors have that continuity.

The team from Richard Hudson Kindergarten view their shared commitment to Tiriti-based practice as an ongoing journey:

> The current staff are a well established team (Grace eight years, Adele seven years and Susan four years here). We are totally committed to our journey and are aware, although admired by our professional others, that we have a long way to go. (We're hoping that we never get there! That we just keep learning and growing and evolving).

Pat Leyland from Belmont–Te Kupenga is supported by her Māori colleague Pera Paekau, in her increasing use of te reo:

> We have parents who come in and they speak the reo with their children in the centre. We have parents who have very little reo but their children are teaching them, their families, and we just keep emphasizing the fact that we're all learning together. I have a little reo and I'm learning but I'm nervous about using it, because I get scared about speaking it in front of people suddenly spontaneously and it's okay to get it wrong because I know Pera will help me get it right and she just keeps encouraging me and it is okay.

Ramila Sadikeen of Brooklands Kindergarten noted the whānau participation as well as the responsibility assumed by her teaching colleagues for the ritual of farewelling children who were leaving to attend school:

> Five families took the opportunity to reflect and reminisce about their part and involvement in the kura and it was an excellent opportunity for the children and wider whānau to see and hear these comments that affirm the aspects of the strong links to whakawhanaungatanga.
>
> The families' comments reflected the deep appreciation of the contribution the kaiako have made in their children's lives and also the acknowledgement of opportunities to make a contribution to the kura.
>
> They expressed how it was for them, said it was a lovely experience that tapped the spiritual elements of themselves within and it had a feel of belonging straight away.
>
> The team now thinks of this tikanga that we follow as a ritual that is well and truly entrenched in the sum total of experiences and learning opportunities that we offer to our tamariki and whānau.
>
> For the first time I felt that I did not initiate the organisation of this tikanga and that I made decisions jointly with my team as they initiated the discussion. Decision was made jointly and thereby giving ownership to the whole experience to all involved—evidence of shared leadership.
>
> The team is showing and taking note of the effective ways of ensuring how this ritual happens.

These educators' embracing and enactment of whānaungatanga means that the children's whānau are drawn into the kindergarten programme on a daily basis, making this journey one that is shared by the whānau whānui. On our last visit to Papamoa, we (Cheryl and Jenny) observed an Indian grandmother comfortably asleep on a couch outside under the shaded courtyard. In Carolyn O'Connor's final reflection, she wrote that:

> We are here to support whānau as well. Our kindergarten has grown. In our whānau we have R. on board helping us to integrate te reo and tikanga in the kindergarten. We still have L. and Nana S. that have volunteered over the last three years. Sometimes we have so many parents; visitors find it hard to find teachers. That is because parents are so engaged with children as well.
>
> We questioned ourselves on the integration of Māori culture into the curriculum, where was it visible? We found it was visible in the children, their relationships and identifying what is "Māori", naturally integrating te reo, their understanding of concepts and tikanga. We were aware of not only approaching a bicultural programme superficially—it was for us about the feeling of the place, a sense of the place, more abstract than tangible. As teachers we needed to reflect on how to identify the aspects that become important to us (like families present during the kindergarten session, sharing with us their aspirations for their tamariki, and truly feeling that this is their place, a shared partnership).

These educators' inclusiveness of families in their programmes reflects an understanding of their role as instigators and agents of transformation, creators of social, cultural, and political spaces that represent, honour, and engage a democratic dissensus respectful of shared narratives (Dahlberg & Moss, 2005), honouring of Māori and other cultures present. This is in contrast to instrumentalist models of "partnership with parents" whereby teachers see their role as informing parents about their child's development, and participation may only be comfortable for parents whose culture matches that of the dominant culture represented in centre discourse.

The Hawera team also commented in their final report as to how their involvement in the research had increased their depth of reflection and awareness regarding their processes for building relationships with whānau: "As a researcher I became more aware of how I approach Māori families in the centre and continuously reflected on the way I approach and relate to them." They were now critiquing some of their previously taken-for-granted assumptions and practices: "I assumed people knew a lot of unexplained things being here. This is not so and face-to-face verbal relationships are more important than giving out printed information that isn't always read, understood or clarifies people's queries." The Hawera team valued their team's involvement in the study, commenting:

- Being a researcher made me feel proud . . . empowered . . . inspired.
- For the children, the reflection of a bicultural environment is even more evident. I have thought more about how the child voices his/her culture and belonging.
- We know that being honest and committed, and reflecting this genuinely in the programme has bought us the best of outcomes.
- Our team has had lots of very in-depth discussions regarding our beliefs and practices. This has taken us on a very positive journey, encouraging us to voice our views, feelings and ways of improving our programme, respecting and sharing the rich culture we all have to share.
- We have reviewed our team philosophy—we are very clear that the relationships we nurture, support and sustain underpin the bicultural programme in our centre.
- As a team our bicultural belief and practices are strong. It affirmed what we are doing and where we are, and provided the signposts for the "where to next?"

- Today, I am aware of the relationships we have with our families and foster their sense of belonging into our centre. I value and support their culture and the things they bring to our centre as it enriches all.
- Treating people equally—giving everyone the same thing—is very different from treating people equitably—giving everyone what they need. We endeavour to treat people equitably.
- How lucky were we to have this opportunity! The commitment and drive to pursue, persevere and then trust the process has enriched our lives—personally and professionally.
- We all agree that nothing in our professional careers so far has affected us in such a powerful way as Te Puawaitanga [the current study].

A powerful example of shared journeying is seen in the following narrative from Vikki Sonnenberg of her experience at Galbraith Kindergarten. This narrative reveals a subtle purposeful process of kaiako enacted validation of Te Ao Māori.

> Katerina and her Mum came from Hamilton to Ngāruawahia to join us. It was year that the Māori Queen died—2006. She actually went to enrol at the other kindergarten which is on the other side of the bridge where they lived but then decided that she wanted Katerina with us—she didn't have a car so she had to walk Katerina over the bridge all the way to us. I remember they were very shy, Mum was looking around and Katerina wouldn't even look at us. I think back to our welcome. What's important for us as a whānau at Galbraith is to make whānau/tamariki feel welcome, to feel it's okay to be here—don't bombard them with the paperwork! So that's how we started.

Initial hui can make a critical difference to engaged Māori responsiveness. A feeling of being valued both through kaiako enactment and the environment was clearly powerful, in that this family chose to make their way across town on foot to attend this particular centre. Vikki's narrative continues:

> Mum decided Galbraith was the place she wanted her daughter to be at so they used to walk over and back everyday. I asked her where she was from, as Māori people do. She was from the Tainui rohe. I talked about some of the practices that happened at Galbraith as an acknowledgement of the tangata whenua. She said "Oh that's really cool", and because the regatta was on I suggested she might want to take a walk with us and help supervise the tamariki. She did that, from then on she'd go and make a cup of tea for herself, not only for herself but also for teachers. So I think we helped create a place of belonging for her.
>
> With the passing of the Māori Queen, Te Arikinui Dame Te Atairangikaahu, Katerina didn't come with us because she was already at the marae. We went on the last day, with the tamariki. The next day Katerina came in with her booklet of the Māori Queen and I said to Whaea, "That's wonderful", because Katerina never does a pānui, she's so shy. We asked her if she wanted to share a pānui. Mum said "Daughter, do you have a pānui?", but Katerina said "No, no". This continued for two days. Then I again said, "Well what about tomorrow?" The next day Katerina brought her pānui in and she stood up by herself. She says "Oh Whaea" to me, wanting to know if her Mum could help her. I replied "Kei te pai". Katerina stood up and she said, "Come on Mum, let's go". So Mum went to stand beside her and she began with "Katerina went to the Māori Queen's funeral but we were there for all

> the days and we saw . . . ", and then Katerina talked about her Uncles and Aunties being there and what she thought was important there. So Mum was starting to instigate the kōrero with her daughter so she could talk to the whānau. Previously you just couldn't get "boo" out of Mum either. So what we saw of this girl, a very shy Māori girl who previously wouldn't talk—once she started you couldn't stop her! It was like she thought "It's okay to do this now, I can do this, my Mum is here." When she finished it was like: "Yes! Katerina!!!" And you could see the smiles on Mum's face and her face and we took a picture of them both together and next day Mum goes, "Oh, have you got that photo?" and of course we blew it up. There was one in Katerina's folder for her stories but there was also one of her and Mum and we laminated it and she took it away. Katerina just loved having her Mum—"This is my Mum—my Mum's doing this—my Mum's doing that", you know, her whole kōrero, her language it just extended, all her kōrero and many times she would pānui after that about a range of things, but a lot of it was based around whānau and the marae, recalling things from when we were at the marae, when we were at the regatta. That was the link for her and she felt comfortable talking about her Māori tikanga. And the other thing that we noticed too about Katerina is she was entering a lot more curriculum areas, it was like a door opened for her and she was able to cope with what was out there now and I truly believe it was from the kōrero when Mum came in and did all that with her and she could see the value of it and for Mum too, she goes "This is choice, this place is choice".

Katerina and her mother find within the centre affirmation of identity, recognition of tangata whenua, and enactment of tikanga Māori and te reo Māori. The centre reflects manaakitanga, aroha, and whakawhanaungatanga, values which resonate for both Katerina and her mother. Embraced within this Te Ao Māori knowing and being, the pair respond at their own pace to the sensitivity and respect shown to them. Vikki encourages the mother's support of her daughter, sharing dialogue around empathy for Katerina. Their standing to pānui, to kōrero to the tamariki and kaiako at mat time reflects a significant collaborative learning paradigm, that of a whaea and a tamaiti, a creating of space for tamariki/whānau Māori to be both akonga and kaiako. This narrative of a puawaitanga, a blossoming, encourages us as an early childhood community to implement praxis which recognises the child as the parent and the parent as the child, and to find ways to position Māori at the centre rather than at the periphery. This is a powerful narrative of puawaitanga generated through Māori educator/whānau and tamaiti collectivity and shared commitment.

Final discussion

Ka Hikitia: Managing for Success: Māori Education Strategy, 2008-2012 contains the aspiration that in five years we will see "Early childhood services promote and reinforce Māori cultural distinctiveness" (Ministry of Education, 2007, p. 31). This requires a transformation of the western dominated early childhood discourse to be one validating of other cultural paradigms. Educators in Aotearoa face the ongoing challenge of encountering the "possibility for 'new makings' of reality, the new possibilities for being that emerge from new makings" engendered by a commitment "to shaping a new and regenerative history" (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993, p. 43).

In applying the narrative approach employed in this study, we have tried to ensure that these "New makings are a collective, shared, social enterprise in which the voices of all participants" are heard, respected, and responded to (Lankshear & McLaren, 1993, p. 43). Through their involvement in this study, educator co-researchers experienced their complicity as teachers responsible for the worlds they create within their early childhood centres. As Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly (2000, p. 61) have written, "Being in this world, we need to remake ourselves as well as offer up research understandings that could lead to a better world". The centres in our study are already well under way with these journeys of new makings, new becomings, although the educator co-researchers recognise that their journey is ongoing.

Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996b), a Tiriti-based document, continues to hold promise for these educator co-researchers. They are committed to honouring and respecting Māori as Indigenous peoples of this land, as expressed in the curriculum's statement that "In early childhood settings, all children should be given the opportunity to develop knowledge and an understanding of the cultural heritages of both partners to Te Tiriti o Waitangi" (Ministry of Education, 1996b, p. 9). For these educators, Tiriti-based practice is an enactment of whanaungatanga. The concept of whanaungatanga is imbued with a sense of our interconnectedness, inter-relationships, interdependence and intersubjectivities. This notion is reflected within *Te Whāriki*'s notions of "well-being" and whānau tangata:

> The well-being of children is interdependent with the well-being and culture of:
>
> - adults in the early childhood setting
> - whānau/families
> - local communities and neighbourhoods. (Ministry of Education, 1996b, p. 42)

This project relied on the willingness of the educator co-researchers to become just that, co-researchers in the study. This role required of them firstly, that they reflect deeply, individually and within their teaching teams, on their practice. "Articulating one's practice can be a deeply personal process requiring close attention, mindfulness, and reflection" (Elliot, 2007, p. 154). Researching with young children is challenging. Reflecting on their previous research, Jennifer and Janice Jipson (2005, p. 42) wondered:

> - How can we capture another's reality when it is continually changing and when the other is a child?
> - How can we directly engage children in the process of meaning making and knowledge production?
> - How might we do this, given the inherent power and status of the researcher, which can readily overwhelm and subvert the child's understandings of her/his own experience and agency?

These questions continue to resonate with us, as we observed the struggle of our educator co-researchers to obtain the "children's voice", ultimately mediated through their positioning as adults, teachers, and researchers. The educator co-researchers realised that they needed to engage deeply in listening to tamariki and whānau in their centres. For Dahlberg and Moss (2006, p. 15)

> A "pedagogy of listening"—listening to thought—exemplifies for us an ethics of an encounter built on welcoming and hospitality of the Other. It involves an ethical relationship of openness to the Other, trying to listen to the Other from his or her own position and experience and not treating the Other as the same. The implications are seismic for education.

In this view of working with the ethics of encounter in a pedagogy of listening the teacher responds to the Other, be it parent or child, as someone beyond her knowledge, beyond her grasp. This positions her as unknowing, but someone willing to learn.

A pedagogy of listening inherently relates to the Other seriously as a person worthy of our respect. Mary Catherine Bateson (2000, p. 62, as cited in Elliot, 2007, pp., p. 166–167) has explained that "the gift of personhood is potentially present in every human interaction, every time we touch or speak or call one another by name, yet denial can be very subtle too, inflicted by the failure to listen, to empathize, to attend".

A pedagogy of responsive listening "means struggling to make meaning from what is said, without preconceived ideas of what is correct or appropriate" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. 15). Confronting the tendency towards judgement is an important challenge, because such habitual judging and stereotyping undermines relationships with parents and therefore children, since "the quality of the contact with the parents and the image we have formed as a result, sometimes projects itself on the child in a 'sinister' way" (Rinaldi, 2006, p. 35). This disposition to suspend judgement is hard for many of us, whose culture, upbringing, and educational and consequent epistemological orientation has engendered a will to understand through naming, judging, labelling, and categorising whatever we encounter. Yet these teachers demonstrated their willingness to open themselves to Otherness, without judgement.

There is an inherent tension in our current early childhood practice of pedagogical documentation, in that we as educators enacting our professional obligations often assume the responsibility for making judgements as to what to notice, what to include, and how these focuses are then interpreted. This dilemma is, of course, also true for narrative methodologies. The milieux of teaching and researching can both be seen as sites of struggle, in which collaborative dialogue can serve as a process of shared meaning-making, in relation to the values that are honoured by that collective (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006). Both can also serve as sites of decolonisation, where an ongoing commitment to social justice underpins this struggle. As Gaile Cannella and Radhika Viruru (2004, p. 154) have written, "countering colonialist, imperialist actions is not easy or immediate; decolonialism requires recognition, disposition, actions, even temporary losses, and long-term struggle".

This project has reconceptualised the role of "teacher" to be one of "educator researchers", or as the teachers described themselves, "hands-on researchers", deconstructing the artificial boundaries between educational practice and academia. It has demonstrated that research "can and should take place as much in the classroom and by teachers as in the university and by 'academics'" (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006, p. 17), relocating the ownership of the research within the

collective of educators and their wider early childhood centre collective of tamariki/children and whānau/families.

4. Limitations of the project

As project co-directors, we acknowledge the limitations in terms of time and financial constraints that prevented us from spending more time out in each of the participating early childhood centres. While it was valuable to include a diverse range and number of centres, and this contributed greatly to the depth and geographical coverage of the project, we would have valued having more time to be physically present in each of the centres, building relationships with the tamariki and whānau involved in the study. While the educator co-researchers appreciated the release time funding available, it would also have been wonderful to have had the resources to be able to more generously fund their time for documenting, transcribing, and theorising their data. As Marion Dekker from Maungatapu Kindergarten so aptly expressed, the biggest constraint for all of us was probably "the busy-ness of our work . . . and the busy-ness of our lives".

5. Building capability and capacity

Project team and institutions/organisations involved

Co-directors

Cheryl Rau, University of Waikato

Dr Jenny Ritchie, Associate Professor Early Childhood Teacher Education, Te Whare Wānanga o Wairaka, Unitec Institute of Technology, New Zealand. At the beginning of the project, Jenny was employed as a senior lecturer at the University of Waikato, and we would like to acknowledge the role of that institution in the initial stages of the project, which was transferred to Unitec when Jenny took up her appointment there at the beginning of 2007.

Kaumātua

Rahera Barrett-Douglas (Ngāti Maniapoto), Kuia for the Te Puawaitanga project

Huata Holmes (University of Otago College of Education), Kaumātua to the project

Research facilitator

Lee Blackie (Senior Teacher, Dunedin Kindergarten Association)

Educator co-researchers

Carolyn O'Connor and Julie Sullivan, Papamoa Free Kindergarten (Tauranga Regional Free Kindergarten Association); Grace Olinga-Manins, Adele Ellwood, and Susan Greig, Richard Hudson Kindergarten (Dunedin Kindergarten Association); Judith Nowotarski, Joy Rangi, Robyn O'Dea (Hawera Kindergarten, South Taranaki Kindergarten Association); Kaley Manu, Galbraith Kindergarten, Ngāruawahia (Kindergartens Waikato); Leah Hellesoe, formerly of Morrinsville Early Learning Centre (Central North Island Kindergarten Association); Marion Dekker, Maungatapu Kindergarten (Tauranga Regional Free Kindergarten Association); Nadine Wishnowsky (Thames Valley Coromandel Playcentre Association); Pat Leyland and Pera Paekau, Belmont–Te Kupenga Kindergarten, Hamilton, (Kindergartens Waikato); Ramila Sadikeen, Joanne Denney, and Anne-Marie Price, Brooklands Kindergarten (North Taranaki Kindergarten Association); Vikki Sonnenberg, formerly of Galbraith Kindergarten, Ngāruawahia

(Kindergartens Waikato); Vicki Stuart, Morrinsville Early Learning Centre (Central North Island Kindergarten Association).

It is evident from the work undertaken that this project has fulfilled the TLRI expectation of partnership between researchers and practitioners. All the educator co-researchers experienced the role and responsibility of being a researcher, fully engaging in not only the data from their own centre, but sharing the responsibility of co-theorising data across the wider project. As educator co-researchers, these teachers were enacting an intersection of theory and practice (Dahlberg & Moss, 2006). As co-directors, we were often in awe of our co-researchers' analysis of particular data, their positionality as educators and relationships with the tamariki and whānau participants central to their understandings within their own research contexts. The relationship with our co-researchers was such that they were able to contact us for support, and we were always ready to respond. Our budgeting allowed for follow-up visits within the North Island, while the Dunedin teachers had the local support of Lee Blackie and Huata Holmes.

6. Presentations and publications based on this project

Throughout the duration of the study, educator co-researchers found opportunities to share learnings from their participation in the project. For example, the Hawera team informed their South Taranaki Kindergarten Association colleagues early on of their intended involvement and later presented their preliminary findings at an association professional learning seminar. Judith Nowotarski, the Hawera head teacher, was subsequently approached by another kindergarten team, with the request that she mentor them in their own bicultural journey. The team from Richard Hudson Kindergarten in Dunedin presented heir findings at the Early Childhood Education Research Hui at Te Kura Akau Taitoka, University of Otago College of Education, on August 3, 2007. Vikki Sonnenberg, whose data came from her experiences at Galbraith Kindergarten, joined Cheryl Rau in presenting at the Early Childhood Convention in Rotorua (see below).

The following are publications and presentations from 2006-7. It should be noted that some of these draw on data and theorising from our previous TLRI (Ritchie & Rau, 2006).

Colbung, M., Glover, A., Rau, C., & Ritchie, J. (2007). Indigenous Peoples and Perspectives in Early Childhood Education. In H. Hedges & L. Keesing-Styles (Eds.), *Theorising early childhood practice: Emerging dialogues* (pp. 137–161). Sydney: Pademelon.

Rau, C. (2007). Shifting Paradigms: Māori women at the interface of Te Tiriti (Treaty) based early childhood education in Aotearoa. *Childrenz Issues, 11*(1), 33–36.

Rau, C. (2007, November). *Ngā Taonga o ngā tūpuna: Gifts from our ancestors—Māori literacies in early childhood education, Aotearoa*. Paper presented as part of the Colloquium: Honouring Children's Voices in Early Childhood in Aotearoa, at the Language, Education, Diversity Conference, University of Waikato, Hamilton.

Rau, C. (2007, December). Ngā Taonga o ngā tūpuna: Gifts from our ancestors—Māori literacies in early childhood education, Aotearoa. Paper presented at a plenary session of the 15th International Conference of Reconceptualizing Early Childhood, Hong Kong Institute of Education.

Rau, C. & Sonnenberg, V. (2007, September). Māori literacies: Ngā Taonga o ngā tūpuna in te Tiriti-based early childhood education. Presentation to the Early Childhood Convention, Rotorua.

Ritchie, J. (2007). Thinking otherwise: “Bicultural” hybridities in early childhood education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. *Childrenz Issues, 11*(1), 37–41.

Ritchie, J. (2007). Bicultural journeying. A researcher’s view. *Playcentre Journal, 129* (Winter), 24–27.

Ritchie, J. (2007, September). *Collective storying of Tiriti-based early childhood praxis.* Paper presented at the Early Childhood Convention, Rotorua.

Ritchie, J. (2007, November).*Whakawhanaungatanga in praxis: Transforming early childhood practice in Aotearoa through honouring indigineity*. Invited presentation to the seminar, Early Childhood Care and Development: Perspectives from the Majority World, Research in Early Childhood Care, Education and Health, University of Victoria, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada.

Ritchie, J. (2007, November). He taonga te reo: Honouring te reo me ōna tikanga, the Māori language and culture, within early childhood education in Aotearoa. Paper presented as part of the Colloquium: Honouring Children’s Voices in Early Childhood in Aotearoa, at the Language, Education, Diversity Conference, University of Waikato, Hamilton.

Ritchie, J. (2007, December). *Honouring Māori subjectivities within early childhood education in Aotearoa.* Paper presented at the plenary session of the 15th International Conference of Reconceptualizing Early Childhood, Hong Kong Institute of Education.

Ritchie, J. (in press). Mā wai he kapu tī? Being, knowing and doing otherwise in early childhood education in Aotearoa. In M. O’Loughlin & R. Johnson (Eds.), *Working the space in between: Pedagogical possibilities in rethinking children’s subjectivity.* New York: SUNY Press.

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Appendix A: Richard Hudson Kindergarten: Te Puawaitanga

Spiro's pounamu story

11 April 2006

Spiro was wearing his taonga, as he always does. I admired it, as I've done before. We talked about the shape of my taonga which is round, and his which is long and thin. Kiyana came along and, after hearing what we were talking about, pulled her pounamu taonga from inside her top. Hers is a similar shape to Spiro's. We talked about the warmth of our pounamu when it's been touching our skin. The children talked about the similarities of theirs and the different shape of mine. Spiro looked thoughtfully at mine and said "Yours looks like a kindergarten teacher's one". I asked him to explain, but he just smiled.

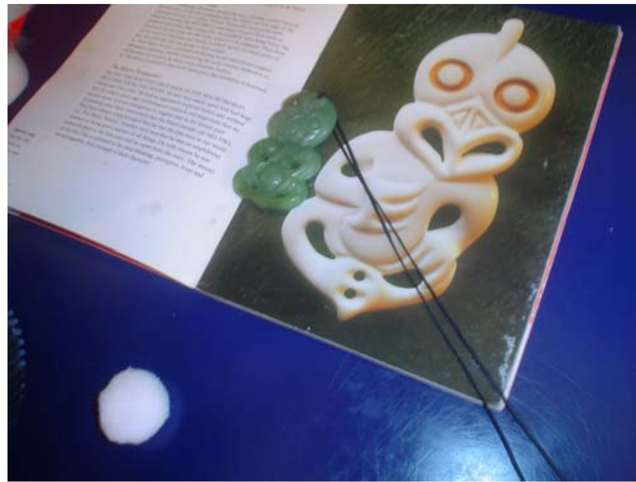
Adele's Pounamu

Spiro's Pounamu

Revisit of the pounamu story

8 May 2006

I went to the library and got some books on pounamu to go with the books I had at home. Lee arrived wearing her beautiful pounamu tiki. Spiro was nearby and Lee introduced herself to him and we began a conversation about our taonga. I got the books from my desk in the office and we sat down at a table that had a sorting game set up on it. Lee got the digital camera and the conversation continued. When I opened the first book, Spiro said “that’s like your one” to me and indeed it was similar. We found a tiki on another page so we compared it to Lee’s one. We also found long touchstone ones like Spiro and Kiyana’s. Spiro was distracted by the sorting game and the end of the session arrived.



Second revisit of the pounamu story

23 May 2006

Lee popped in on Monday and delivered her cherished piece of Pounamu (inanga). She chatted to Spiro about it while Spiro worked on his 3-plait for a kite he was making. When it was time for Lee to go, she said we could keep the pounamu for a few days. She had shown Spiro how to lick a finger and wet the stone to see a darker colour. It seemed to me that we had our beautiful carved taonga and Lee's rock, but that we needed to see something in between. I went to a local carver's shop and got some wonderful small pieces of pounamu in different colours. We chose a quiet time at the end of the morning to examine the pounamu. Spiro's Mum, Sheryl, joined us. I had brought along a torch so that we could see inside the rocks. There was a beautiful piece of kawakawa pounamu. When Spiro saw it he said "Its pango!" Another piece was a mid green, and he said it "looked like a leaf", and said something else that I couldn't quite pick up, which Sheryl clarified, with a giggle, as being a spearmint leaf lolly. Spiro loved the torch—he'd made it very clear that he would hold the torch, and continually examined the pieces. He loved the spots in the stones, and he was particularly fascinated with the darkness at the thick end of the piece of kawakawa, which lit up only around the edge. He reckoned the light shone through the small inanga piece.

Spiro's photography 1

When I suggested that I would get a damp cloth to moisten Lee's big inanga rock, Spiro's finger was in and out of his mouth and had wet the rock in a flash. His eagerness was great. His interest was even better. And his experimentation was just amazing. Would the torch shine through the pounamu with the addition of the piece of paper with information on the names and locations/origins of each piece I'd got from the carver?

Spiro’s photography 2

While he was experimenting with the torch, paper and stones, Sheryl and I talked to each other and to Spiro about pounamu in general. I showed Spiro a book showing the South Island and where the pounamu comes from in relation to Otepoti/Dunedin. I shared with Spiro and Sheryl some of the information that the carver had told me and that I had read - about the hinu kererū/kereru fat legend, about the belief that the pounamu is fish in the water and that when it is taken out of the river it turns into stone. As other children stopped to have a look at what we were doing, Spiro confidently told them about the stones, the torch, the light etc. The sun was shining through the window, so I suggested that Spiro hold the pieces up to the natural light which he did. Sheryl said she has a light box at home and a piece of pounamu that they would look at. She told me about a family piece of pounamu that her Dad has, that will get handed down to the wh nau one day. Kia ora.

Lee B

Ahakoa iti, he poenemu
Although it is small it is of greenstone

Ahakoa iti, he poenemu

Although it is small it is of greenstone

Lee B.

Mei 8: Met Spiro who had shown some interest in poenemu[5]. He was wearing his piece and I showed him the hei tiki I was wearing. Adele got her books out that she was going to use to extend their initial kōrero—it is at the provocation stage. We looked at the images and compared, he told me his Dad gave him his. I told him I'd bring back an uncut piece I had at home and that he could look after it for me. He nodded and said "Okay". I said "Ka kite", he replied "Bye!"

Mei 22: As promised I returned to the kindergarten bearing my toaka of uncut poenemu, Spiro was creating a butterfly that he had just learned how to triple weave, he contemplated giving it to me then decided to keep it for kindergarten and could make me one tomorrow, I was happy he made that decision after all the hard work. I showed him my piece of rock and told him that this is what it looks like before it is cut, and that when you wet it and rub it you can see its green, he compared this to the piece around his neck and commented that his piece was darker, I explained that this was called inanga and is a lighter green, he asked where my piece was when I told him that my pieces are made from the lighter coloured stone. I gave him the piece to handle which he commented was cold compared to the piece around his neck, his Mum was present today, he took the piece over to her and demonstrated what I had done, he licked his fingers and rubbed the stone to show her that it is green and that it looks just like a rock as a disguise.

I introduced myself to his Mum and explained that I had traveled to the North Island with Grace and Adele and am supporting the research.

NB: please note I have used Poua's dialect for greenstone and for treasure: poenemu me toaka.

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[5] Lee is using the southern dialect, as advised by Huata Holmes, the project kaumātua.

June 2006

Rākau 27 June 2006

Kiyana has been provoked by the introduction of rākau this week. We haven't done rākau for a while, and Kiyana has really enjoyed the introduction of it. She told me that she liked it after the first mat time session, and then asked if we were doing it at mat time the following morning. We have done it at several mat times this week, and collectively the children have taken to it very well.

After mat time the second morning we had done it, Kiyana and her friend Tia came to me and asked if we could do some more rākau. As we got going, Kiyana commented that she liked doing it in a small group (3 of us). I extended them by showing them a more complex move (touching each others' diagonal rākau). They both found this hard to do, but persevered. The kindergarten was industrious that morning, and the experience ended after about ten minutes when I had to give my attention to another child.

Kiyana—I am so impressed with your attitude to new things, and with your natural attraction to things Māori. Your pronunciation is amazingly good. Tino pai rawa atu e hoa. (Adele)

I told Kiyana that I would like to have a little chat with her and she said "kōrero" and I said yes a kōrero. I knew that she understood more than she was actually able to say in Māori. So I said "Kiyana if I say 'Haere mai, what do I mean"—she signed and said "come." Then I said what about "kei te pehea koe?" Kiyana did not say what it meant, but she replied "kei te pai" and gave me the thumbs up.

I asked her two more "E noho ki te kumu". Sit on your bottom, she replied, and "haere atu."

Go away, she said. Then she said I know "potae" what does it mean I asked "hat" what is tree called in Māori she asked me. "Rākau" I said. Is it? She asked. Ae, I said. What is the Māori word for "basketball hoop" she asked. "Aua" I don't know I replied. I shall have to ask Kat I said.

I know "rakiraki" she said and "raiona". What does raiona mean I asked? "Tiger" she said. I said it actually means lion. Tiger is "Taika" then she said I know ngēru and kuri. I said, you are a very clever girl.

We had taught her the word "matua" a few days before and what it meant. Kiyana promptly told me she was going to teach her Dad the word "matua". (Grace)

Kiyana, you asked me a few days ago the Māori word for "basketball hoop", and I said I didn't know, but I would find out. Well, I asked Mariana, our Māori support teacher.

"Basketball hoop—pahikete paoro mohiti"

Kiyana, you keep asking those questions! (Grace, August 2006)

Kiyana's ability to understand te reo Māori continues to surprise and excite me. Her enthusiasm to learn and use Māori is whole heartedly supported by her whānau whose respect for te reo is apparent in their attitude toward Kiyana's learning. Kiyana's Mum has been keen to learn new words and phrases for use at home.

Today Kiyana told me that when her younger brother is doing something naughty her Mum says "kaua e mahi pēnā!"

Not only Kiyana's pronunciation but her intonation of words are beautiful, and lead me to believe that her understanding is beyond even what I had imagined. Irrespective of what I say Kiyana has the ability to quickly decipher what I have said. She is extremely attentive to the words I use, my intonation, emphasis and body language. When answering me Kiyana often repeats one of the words I have used, as if to reassure me that she has indeed understood.

Kat: (when looking at a butterfly on her jersey) "Te ātaahua hoki o to pūrerehua!" (how beautiful your butterfly is!)

Kiyana: (nodding) "It's a beautiful butterfly. Butterfly is pūrerehua. "

Kiyana delights in her extra-ordinary knowledge of Māori kupu on a variety of subjects (food, body parts, verbs animals etc), and is keen to share what she knows with others.

Kiyana: "What's the Māori word for tree?"

Kat: "Rākau"

Kiyana: "Is it?"

Kat: "Yes, can you say rākau?"

Kiyana: "Rākau, and I'll tell my Mum that tree is rākau"

Kiyana is exceeding all my expectations in her ability not just to rote learn kupu, but to make associations through language. Today Kiyana asked me the Māori word for shoe. "It's hū" I replied.

That sounds like "*Who* are you?" she said.

11 August 2006
Susan Greig, Grace Olinga-Manins, Adele Ellwood, Lee Blackie

Our reflections to support the data for Kiyana

Kiyana is a four-and-a-half-year-old girl who attends morning sessions at Richard Hudson Kindergarten. She has a natural inclination to things Māori, and is a very able child.

We believe that commitment and daily practice of integrating te reo and tikanga Māori is very visible and supports our kaupapa—through Kiyana's keen response to new kupu when she is excited to transfer this to home—this is the principle whānau tangata in action, it also shows the tuakana–teina strategy where she is the competent person sharing new info with others and helping them to this competency. We also celebrate the concept ako, where the role of teaching and learning is reciprocal, Kiyana is the teacher with the new kupu.

Kiyana constantly seeks new contextual kupu to stretch and challenge her learning. This, we view as self-assessment and is key to intrinsic motivation, building on her competence and confidence, knowing that she is a learner capable of adding to the knowledge she has, and knowing that she is constantly learning more. She is keen to ask for a new kupu, and if the adult she asks doesn't know, she is learning how that adult may seek answers from another adult or look it up in the dictionary. We believe that this reflects that Kiyana feels valued with her learning, we take her seriously and she knows this. When we don't know an answer, we are honest and say "I don't know" and together go off to find out. We see the glee in her eye when she asks us questions we don't know the answers to—authenticity is alive in our practice.

We know that she is proud of these accomplishments and know that the principle of whakamana is also enacted in our daily practice for her to demonstrate this. Seeing Kiyana with this thirst for challenge and extension is like "life blood" to teachers who are also keen to keep passionate about delivering on a treaty-based curriculum.

From the examples enclosed we feel that the sociocultural approach is also evident in our practice as the parents have validated our thinking with their perspective on two recent stories. One of the narratives is from our Kaiako Māori (Kat) who enhances our programme for both teachers and children, as a support teacher to keep reo alive and keep teachers challenged. Kat's input (and that of our second kaiako, Mariana) keeps our resolve and moving, as well as making it more "visible" (audible). Their mahi keeps the teachers challenged and correct, and helps te reo to be provided in a natural forum. She is employed especially for this role, due to teachers who have a very strong commitment Treaty –based learning and teaching. Kat is employed especially for this role, due to our strong commitment to.

This further supports the information originally sent about the interview with Kiyana's parents (Kelly and Warren 25th May) where Warren is feeling affirmed as a generation who missed the opportunity to live and learn his native tongue, his excitement and celebration of Kiyana's new learning is welcomed and implemented into their family context. We see him as proud and willing to learn alongside his daughter, who is actively participating in reo in the kindergarten context.

We believe this is non-threatening for Warren because we as teachers are non-Māori but supported by Māori resource teachers, so again the community of learners is embraced and practiced without anyone feeling whakamā. We also believe that the principle ngā hononga /relationships has been a key to this success as we have a relaxed and friendly relationship with this family which has enabled a non-threatening approach to building on reo together.

The child has genetic links to ancestors, god, mother and father therefore each child comes with a history which must be valued and respected.

Hui Topi 2006

Kiyana

26 June 2006

Kiyana and I got talking one morning sitting on the couch. Kiyana loves reading and we usually sit on the couch reading. This morning I asked her how many Māori kupu she knew. Kiyana understood what I said because she proceeded to narrate the kupu she knows.

Kiyana is very forthcoming with her reo and will often answer without prompting in Māori, then in English. Kiyana has also introduced kupu that we do not use at kindergarten like wai poroporo (we use tawa) and kahurangi (we use kikorangi) though she uses both tawa and kikorangi at kindergarten. This would strongly indicate that some reo is being used at home, as was noted in our first narratives when we had a kōrero with her parents.

Thinking that we had spent enough time together and that she might want to go and do something else, I asked her if he wanted to go and play. Kiyana said no. So I took the chance to ask her what waiata she knows. There was no stopping her when she started. Another child joined Kiyana and they both had a ball and sang six songs:

Māhunga pakihiwi puku hope waewae

E toru nga mea-

E hara-

Te Aroha-

E tu kahikatea-

Tirama tirama

Kiyana knows more waiata, but I applauded them both and asked them to go and explore, which they happily did.

Towards the end of term I asked Kiyana if she would like to learn some Māori sentences, she smiled and said yes. (Grace)

Michaela

October 2006

Michaela is the mother of Jakob, a four year old boy in our morning session. Michaela is Pākehā, and Jakob is of Te Aihaunui-a-papa-rangi descent. Michaela and Jakob came to us from another kindergarten on the recommendation of friends and whānau in March 2006 when Jakob was aged 3 years 8 months.

At Richard Hudson Kindergarten we pride ourselves on building respectful relationships (Ngā Hononga) with emphasis on mihi mahana, welcome, manaakitanga and a willing openness to collaboration with whānau Māori. We believe this is evident by this recommendation above. We also believe that when Māori families recognise that their heritage is valued they will feel comfortable and safe.

Michaela's mother is totally passionate about Te Ao Māori. She has a degree in te Reo and teaches in the central North Island. Michaela has studied te reo Māori and kapa haka through high school, and admits that the "gift" she was given (that she learnt through her mother's passion) was not something she has always appreciated. But since having Jakob and older sister, Ariana (6), Michaela has come to appreciate, and use, her reo more. Michaela sang waiata to her children when they were small. Both Michaela and the children's father have bicultural aspirations for their children (although the father cannot kōrero Māori). Michaela wants the children to be strong in te reo and proud of their identity. Michaela now teaches kapahaka to a group of schools down the peninsula in Dunedin.

Michaela also credits us with motivating her to use more reo at home with the children. She said that the kupu resource we created for the whānau during Te Wiki o Te Reo Māori (attached) has challenged her and Ariana to try to learn some new kupu at home. Michaela is very happy with the bicultural programme we offer at Hudson. It is more than Jakob's previous kindergarten, and than Ariana's school offer. The school has a large kapahaka group but there is very little integration of anything bicultural in the classroom setting. Michaela values knowing more than one language. She believes we offer more than her children could get elsewhere, except for Kura Kaupapa. Her sisters have Māori as their first language, having gone through Kura Kaupapa. They found English hard when they went to a Catholic school later on.

We believe this to be an example of whakamana—as a process that empowers children tolerant and grow. This too has had a parallel affect for Michaela.

Michaela talked of the special things about tikanga Māori such as the caring and respect that are less valued and visible in the Pākehā culture. She believes you are either "into it or not" (Te Ao Māori), saying she had it pushed onto her through kapa haka etc.

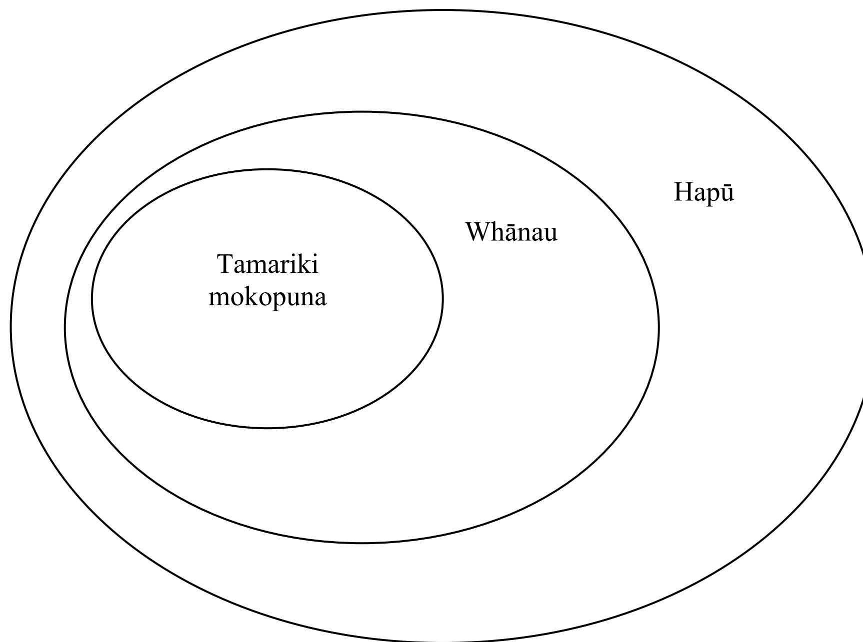
We are a reasonably confident team who continue to build on simple phrases, sentences and kupu Māori. Hence we employ a resource teacher Māori, who supports and scaffolds this learning for us. She is our key resource and we know that she, too, continues to build and strengthen her own

working theories, knowledge, skills and learning dispositions in te reo and tikanga Māori. She is one of our professional learning providers who role models and demonstrates alongside us and the children. This is empowering for us, and the kōrero that we have outside child contact time allows us to reflect on Māori perspectives and share our world view too.

Michaela—analysis

In Bronfenbrenner's *Ecology of Human Development*, the context of early childhood education is depicted in conjunction with the relationships between the immediate learning environments of the child. Also key to the child is the adult's environment as it influences their capacity to care and educate the child. From a bicultural perspective this aligns with Whānau Tangata while defined in *Te Whāriki*, as encompassing the wider world of family and community with recognition of the interdependency between the wellbeing of children, whānau, education deliveries and communities. Therefore the distillation of relationships becomes more pronounced as relationships move closer to individuals and the groups/whānau and families they identify and relate with. (Hemara, 2000).

The Bronfenbrenner model also aligns in a Māori model where the youngest generation, surrounded by circles of support. The tamariki mokopuna are seen at the centre of Māori life in the whānau. The circular diagram (from Human Development in Aotearoa) shows that the whānau or extended family surrounds and supports the next generation—the tamariki mokopuna (youngest generation). The whānau is nestled in the hapū, and the hapū in the iwi.



We were very surprised to find that we had a parent in our kindergarten who has such untapped potential! Michaela had never indicated to us that she had any reo, although of course we knew that Jakob was Māori. We still are not sure of how much reo, waiata, kapahaka and tikanga she has. Michaela is a single parent and works, so we do not get many opportunities to talk with her. We are glad that we provide a reason/opportunity to inspire Michaela to use reo with her children.

From her interview we believe that Michaela is not passionate about her reo. It is something she has lived, through her mother's passion. But having children she has aspirations for children to be strong in their reo and proud of their identity. We find this situation ironic or is it a binary, she has definite resistance due to her experience of having reo forced on her yet desperately wanting it for her children. We are hopeful that this "dis-ease" for her will decline due to her increased use of the language since the families' participation in our setting. We are thrilled that she wants her children to be sound in their identity Māori, and that we have supported this through our commitment to treaty based teaching and learning. Kia kaha to her!

We believe that our support and empathy for Michaela is framed by whanaungatanga (according to Rose Pere, 1994). The essence of this is the quality relationships and cultural interactions between adults and adults, adults and children and children and children. We consider our kindergarten to be a whānau support and with mahitahi/collaboration we are playing our role in supporting the revitalization of the reo and cultural values.

Kōrero with Jakob Tutaki

26 October 2006

I acknowledged Jakob's reo by telling him that I was very impressed with how good he was he was and that he knew a lot of kupu. Then Jakob said he "liked saying things in Māori." I asked him if Mum spoke Māori with him at home. Jakob replied and said "no, only at kindergarten".

I asked about singing Māori songs at home.

Jakob said, "Sometimes".

I asked Jakob what songs he liked? Jakob named "E Hara" and "E toru ngā mea". He also said "I know my colours."

Jakob became restless, so I said he could go if he wanted to and he left. I had another kōrero with Jakob on 29 November 2006

I asked him to e noho and he sat down. I reminded him of the last kōrero we had and he nodded.

Grace: Why do you like Māori songs?

Jakob: Māori songs are harder. I enjoy Māori things.

When asked again if he sang Māori songs at home, Jakob said "Dad sings Māori songs, when I am going to sleep."

I asked him if he is Māori.

Jakob said, "Yes". What about Dad? "Dad is Māori" he replied. Is Mum Māori? I asked—"No", he replied.

What is Mum? I asked. Jakob shrugged his shoulders. Would he like to learn more Māori songs? I asked—"Yes", Jakob replied.

Why, I asked. "Because I like Māori" he replied.

Jakob is very young and therefore it is not very easy to get information from him especially if he is distracted by what is happening around him. Jakob's knowledge of things Māori is very spontaneous. He will offer answers to questions asked in English in te reo Māori. Jakob's retention of Māori kupu and waiata is very good. Jakob knows most of our waiata both in Māori and English. I actually call him my assistant when we sing songs on small mat, because most times he will lead the group

Learning haka at Hudson

November 2006

The children and Teachers of Richard Hudson Kindergarten have been learning haka from Matua Paul. We have had approximately six 10 minute sessions where we have been learning a haka to welcome visitors and a haka to honour someone special.

The children (and teachers) are responding very positively and enthusiastically. We informed our whānau by newsletter that we were hoping to learn haka and invited feedback on possible tikanga restrictions.

No feedback at all was received, so we have gone ahead.

The four children in the Te Puawaitanga study (Spiro, Kiyana, Izaak and Jakob) have all responded positively to the introduction of haka. Izaak only got one session before he left for school, but the other three tamariki have participated fully and have been awesome role models to the other children.

In interviewing Spiro, Kiyana and Jakob about learning haka, they have all indicated enjoyment of haka (Spiro—likes mostly everything about it, Kiyana—"I like haka, it's really Good"). When asked what they like, all three said it is Toia Mai that they like the best. All of them have seen haka elsewhere (Spiro—"At my sister's school", Kiyana—'With Mum somewhere and on tele", Jakob—"My Dad does haka with his friends", Izaak—"At the rugby").

It seems that these children are naturally attracted to things Māori, such as haka. Is it their wairua connecting them to their tipuna? The attraction seems so spontaneous and genuine, so genetically innate. We believe that exposing them to Te Ao Māori at kindergarten is providing a vital link for them to their cultures, especially for those who are not living a Māori life at home, who only get things Māori on special occasions at their marae or elsewhere in the community. Kindergarten is a regular chance for them to embrace and practice being Māori. Being and/or acting Māori is celebrated here. And their mana just grows and grows.

We also know this is our responsibility to continually build on things Māori in our treaty-based teaching and learning pedagogical design. While we consulted as a means to inform and if need be respond (and negotiate) to parent and whānau concerns or challenges we were united in our intent to ignite, inspire and have children and families desire more aspects of te reo me tikanga. Barth once stated that when teachers stopping learning so too do the tamariki!

Izaak

December 2006
Revisit 2, 6 November, 2006

Izaak was talking about his upcoming fifth birthday. I couldn't remember the exact date so I suggested we go and look in his profile book. We discussed the date of his birthday then I suggested we look through his book. Izaak agreed.

When we got to the page with the entry about the death of the Māori Queen (21 August), I asked if I could read it aloud. As I did, Izaak smiled, but didn't comment. When I read the first revisit (24 August), Izaak added that although Uncle Ryan and Auntie Hayley were Māori, Granddad Lindsay wasn't and he reiterated that Mum isn't.

I read Izaak the response that Kate (Mum) had written and when I read the bit about visiting the Marae, Izaak told me that he'd been to Nana's funeral, adding that "she was really old". I asked him if the new marae that Kate mentioned was at Karitane, he said he didn't know. Kate had mentioned the pounamu of the Parata Whānau, and Izaak showed recognition as I showed him my pounamu taonga.

Izaak noticed the car stickers on the page surrounding Kate's entry, and as Izaak is a car fanatic, he commented on the amount of stickers and asked how many there were. I led the counting in te reo and Izaak counted with me, but he didn't understand "tekau ma whā", so he mumbled something about counting again, so we counted in English.

When I read the bit about Kate wanting Izaak to learn as much about his culture as possible, I asked him about things Māori that he knew—suggesting waiata (and listing some we sing),and kupu such as the counting that we'd just done. Then Izaak said "what about haka?"—we had just watched the haka from the All Blacks vs England game this morning that Susan had showed us at mat time. I told Izaak that we are planning to learn a haka (but Izaak's last day at kindergarten is this Friday—then he's off to school) and that I would try to arrange the kaiako to teach us this week if possible.

Analysis of interview with Kate (from tape) and narratives of Izaak
Kate is the Pākehā mother of Izaak, who has just left kindergarten for school. Kate and her husband Shane have Izaak, and Kate is hapū with their second child. Shane is of Kai Tahu descent.

We are aware of Izaak's emerging Māori identity because of the way he is responding to things Māori at kindergarten. (UNCROC Article 30—Indigenous children who come from ethnic, religious and linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to their own culture, religion or language). It is an enormous and very complex concept for Izaak to understand and even more so for him to verbalise. Izaak is shaping his Māori identity through his immediate family, his whānau, kindergarten, his peers and the media (books, newspapers, television). It is shaping his bicultural, social, personal and spiritual being. As Moeke-Pickering (1996) says in *Māori Identity Within Whānau*, the shaping of identities begins in early childhood. They also state that there is a clear link between family practices and identity development.

On speaking to Kate about Izaak's response to the mat time talk about the death of the Māori Queen, when he identified himself as being a Māori, Kate was able to tell me about the process that Izaak was going through as he defined and categorized what is Māori to him. He knew that some members of his family were Māori and some were not. He knows that he has an affiliation to a particular marae, Karitane. He knows that there is an audible linguistic difference. He knows that some Māori people have dark skin (but confusingly not all dark skinned people are Māori, and some including himself are not dark). Izaak also knows about Māori cultural practices such as

waiata and haka. There are some things that he is being consciously "taught" that are shaping his identity, and there are other things that he is learning by "osmosis", that are being "caught" that will shape who he is.

Kate explained about Izaak's marae experiences, and also experiences with whānau where he is exposed to Te Ao Māori. Both Kate and Shane want Izaak to have as much exposure to things Māori as possible in order for him to develop a bicultural identity. Kate acknowledged what Izaak has learnt through kindergarten, particularly the reo.

Recognising children's rights to their identities as cultural beings is a key concern of educators committed to Tiriti-based ECE (Ritchie & Rau, 2006).

We believe we have, as non-Māori people/teachers, in a conventional learning environment, upheld our responsibility as enablers/"key holders" (O'Loughlin, 1995b), to deliver on the explicit expectations of *Te Whāriki*. Also, in Article 2 of Te Tiriti o Waitangi reference is made to toaka/toanga/treasure—the language. Language is the culture and culture is the language! (Poua Huata says).

Therefore, we have actively taken our role to take the lead in implementing our mandated curriculum (Ritchie & Rau, 2006).

We see Māori parents/whānau as another important resource and acknowledge that the degree of knowledge and skills will vary dependent on their life experiences. As we build the relationship with whānau through informal kōrero, the hope and possibility of them contributing to the programme, such as stories, te reo, tikanga, kai etc…. will happen spontaneously. We will and do invite contribution when planning aspects of the programme. Because of the relationship that we have built with Kate and Shane we hope that they will feel comfortable to contribute more of their Māori world with us when their next child starts at our kindergarten.

9 November 2006

And it happened! The kaiako (who happens to be my tane) came today and took a short introductory session of haka. It was great that the children were already familiar with actions and kupu such as takahia, "hī", and "hope". Izaak was enthusiastic and joined in. He was able to copy the movements that Matua Paul did. When I asked him afterwards about the haka session he said it was "good" (as did many of the other children—notably Spiro from the first set of data we sent in—he kept thanking Paul "for teaching us the haka" and Kiyana from the second set of data who drew him four pictures to thank him).

Whānau—Sheryl

December 2006

Sheryl came to our kindergarten with her daughter Kea, who is now aged 8. Her son, Spiro, is four and a half years old and attends our morning session.

When Sheryl was looking for a kindergarten for Kea, she went to one in close proximity to her home. It was a definite bonus for Sheryl to realise she'd found a centre with a strong bicultural focus.

Sheryl's upbringing in rural Southland, with her Māori father (Kai Tahu me Kāti Mamoe) and her Pākehā mother had limited biculturalism. Sheryl didn't want Kōhanga Reo for her children, but was hopeful that her children would have exposure to Te Ao Māori in their education. Sheryl was part of a Kapahaka group at Intermediate and studied te reo Māori at High School. A busy mother and art student, Sheryl's bicultural world is now mainly tilted towards her Pākehā side. Sheryl tends to use kupu for colours and numbers at home with her children. She greets and answers the teachers (including ngā kaiako Māori) in English. She regrets this when thinking about it later at home, as she knows a lot more te reo than she uses.

Sheryl can see an increased level in the Māori component of our bicultural programme from when Kea was at Kindergarten to now (. . . our journey continues . . .). She is disappointed that Kea's school, whilst having a good Kapahaka group, does not expose the children to Te Ao Māori within their daily practice. Spiro has a natural attraction to and interest in te reo me tikanga Māori (for example, rākau, mahi rāranga). His pronunciation is superb.

The prospect of being a main provider of taha Māori to Spiro makes me feel both honoured ,but also daunted. Sheryl knows that I am non–Māori/Pākehā, and that my whānau are Māori (Ngāti Raukawa). I feel that what I know is imbalanced by how much I don't know. I am learning all the time, and recently was in a tuakana teina situation when Tania, our kindergarten cleaner, left a note telling me that I needed to bury the harakeke scraps, not put them in the rubbish bin! I have since been able to pass this tikanga on to Spiro and others.

After interviewing Sheryl for this narrative, I asked her to make any changes to enhance its authenticity. She did, and added the following comments spontaneously . . . I feel the teaching of Te Reo at Richard Hudson is giving Spiro a great foundation to carry on learning and encourages his interest in Te Ao Māori, this is also true for me as a parent, and I deeply appreciate this (as in making me remember what I know and using it!)

Sheryl
(Our analysis of the narrative titled “Whānau—Sheryl”)
He aha te mea nui o te ao?
He tangata, he tangata, he tangata

Whānau tangata/family and community are very important aspects of the culture of Richard Hudson Kindergarten. We encourage the interaction of both kindergarten and local community to bring about balance, variety and richness for our tamariki. We believe that it does take a whole village to bring up a child. We have a lot of elderly people in our immediate community and we foster strong links with them. When Sheryl began her diploma of art this year, we were able to negotiate/barter art supplies for art lessons/extension for the children at RHK. We had something that Sheryl needed and Sheryl has skills that we wanted our children exposed to. That’s whānau tangata, whanaungatanga and ngā hononga at their best.

Our bicultural programme at Richard Hudson Kindergarten has built up over many years. Recently we have been rewarded by parents such as Sheryl (and others) who tell us—in a very quiet, modest and not-initiated-by-the-whānau way—which we are the catalyst for them reawakening their reo to use at home with their tamariki and whānau. This supports the concept in Jenny Ritchie’s chapter in *Weaving* Te Whāriki (2003) of non-Māori teachers being the “key holders” to ensuring that the dual heritage of this nation is recognized and that te reo and tikanga is enacted as is explicit from our curriculum document of *Te Whāriki* (1996). The storying approach of data collection for this research is very emotive and “true”.

Stories are powerful research tools. They provide us with a picture of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems. (Noddings & Witherell, 1991, p. 280)

As we found with Warren (Kiyana's Dad) in the first set of data, we are experiencing the stage in the history of our country where whānau who have not had a lot of exposure to reo are embracing it (in differing ways) for their tamariki. Warren is fiercely proud of Kiyana. He sees her mana growing, and wants her (and their son, Tavarn) to have what he missed out on.

If you want to understand the Present
You must first understand the Past
The circumstances of Today
Were shaped by the events of Yesterday
To predict what will happen Tomorrow
You need to understand what is happening Today.

Paul Temm

The concept of tuakana teina is very interesting and diverse. Whilst definitely being the tuakana to Spiro with te reo and tikanga, perhaps we are tuakana to Sheryl as well, in that we are encouraging her to learn/use te reo. However, knowing what secondary school level te reo involves, I strongly suspect that Sheryl would have more reo than us at kindergarten (excluding our two kaiako Māori), if she had the motivation to use it rather than let it sleep. Therefore I see us as active tuakana to Spiro, and Sheryl as a passive tuakana - at this stage. Without realizing it, we are modelling te reo as a usable, valuable and everyday taonga not only to our children, but increasingly we realise that the ripples are going a lot further out in the pond.

Our scaffolding technique is allowing our children to reach the next platform in the educational/learning context. We are walking the poutama alongside our whānau who are gaining confidence and competence due to the culture of our place.

This also strongly demonstrates how we are practicing the principle of whakamana not only with tamariki but also with parents and whānau. We believe that Sheryl's story is one that shows how we value her experiences and that we are "fanning her embers" to carry on awakening the things within that will continue to become more apparent in her identity. This is like the concept of the "chaos theory", our window of interactions within her is providing opportunities to affirm her experiences and determine her identity. Sheryl shared some stories that reflect some hurt from naīve people who have trampled on her mana, and by engaging in the kōrero from this project, she is strengthening and is feeling heard and valued and totally encouraged. We anticipate that somewhere in the future we will see this metamorphosis in her art work that she is currently pursuing.

Seek out the secrets of the hidden well-spring of your mind
And know the sounds and dreams of your spirit
So you shall blossom into the world
And the world in turn is transformed.

Hirini Melbourne

Kia kaha Sheryl.