The art work on the cover is by Jacob Freeman-Broderick, who is a Year 8 student at Palmerston North Intermediate Normal School.

Jacob chose to do this artwork because he goes to the Fiji Islands every year and loves the culture of the Fijian people. He has included the border in some Masi designs from traditional Fijian tapa cloth. The centre piece of the artwork is a hibiscus flower and frangipani blossoms. Jacob has created these flowers especially for his Mum as they are her favourite flowers. He has been developing his skills using water colour painting during his art class with his art teacher, Mrs Spriggs.

Palmerston North Intermediate Normal School has a roll of 684 students. It is made up of students from many different cultures with a wide range of learning needs. The school is the base for two of the Manawatu’s Resource Teachers of Learning and Behaviour.
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Editorial

Welcome to the second edition of Kairaranga for 2011. A long-standing tradition of the journal is that student art is showcased on the cover of each edition. In relation to the second edition each year, the cover art is sourced from a school where the RTLB conference is to be held. This year, it is Palmerston North. Feedback we receive from readers tell us that these covers are always well received! We welcome your feedback about any aspect of the journal, and this can be sent to our email address at: kairaranga@massey.ac.nz. We also welcome the submission of your work for publication. We accept practice papers, position papers, research papers and storied experiences. Please refer to the last page of each edition for a description of these types of papers, and for instructions on how to submit.

Included in this and previous editions are examples of all these types of papers. We open with a paper by Anita Johansen, Steven Little and Angeleque Akin-Little that describes a study investigating teachers’ perceptions of the cause of school behavioural problems and the effectiveness of positive behavioural interventions. This is followed by a description of one teacher’s changing practice as a result of professional learning in the Secondary Literacy Project as told by Rowena Taylor, Kate Parker-Corney and Ken Kiplin. Reported in this article are the substantive changes that occurred for one Social Studies teacher in relation to her reluctant readers. The third article by Rosina Merry, Donna Mitchell and Linda Jones explores Hero Stories, a narrative approach developed to support a child with autism to gain self-control and navigate his world. In the next article, Jill Bevan-Brown introduces readers to a waka tino whakarawea model for evaluating programmes and services for Māori learners. The fifth article by Toia Caulcutt and Vanessa Paki raises important questions regarding the alignment of assessment procedures and practices between Early Childhood and Early Intervention – recommendations for practice are made. Next, Ingrid-Frengley-Vaipuna, Lesiel Kapu-MacIntyre and Tracy Riley discuss the use of Francois Gagne’s Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent as applied to Tongan secondary school students in New Zealand. In this article, two case studies of Tongan young women are shared.

Action research is a growing phenomenon in New Zealand schools as a way for teachers to reflect upon their practice with the aim of improving it. The next article describes an action research project undertaken by Kelly Mercer that focused on improving the literacy outcomes for a group of Years 5-8 boys in a small rural full primary school. Finally in this edition, a heart-warming and honest account of what it is like to live with a stutter, as written by Lisa Margrain.

We hope you enjoy this edition and thank you all for your continued support of the journal.

All the best for the remainder of the year.

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Kairaranga

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An Examination of New Zealand Teachers’ Attributions and Perceptions of Behaviour, Classroom Management, and the Level of Formal Teacher Training Received in Behaviour Management

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ABSTRACT
The way in which behaviour is perceived and managed by teachers can influence the classroom environment. The current study examined teachers’ perceptions of the cause of school behavioural problems and the effectiveness of positive behavioural interventions. It also examined the level of formal training participants have received in behaviour management. Results indicated that a number of participants perceived school behavioural problems to be caused by external factors such as parenting and that these behaviours are controllable by the students. Results also indicated that a number of teachers believe positive behavioural interventions do not work despite the research that indicates that they do. Teachers also report receiving minimal formal training in behaviour management or ongoing professional development in the area which is likely to influence their perceptions and classroom management practice. Results are discussed in terms of teacher training and professional development and the current work of the Ministry of Education’s Positive Behaviour 4 Learning (PB4L) initiative.

Research paper

Keywords: Behaviour, professional development, teacher learning, teachers’ perceptions

INTRODUCTION
Behavioural problems in the classroom can have a negative effect on teachers and students. Students with behavioural problems are likely to perform poorer on a variety of variables measuring school adjustment (e.g., academic, social) than their peers without behavioural problems (Baker, Grant, & Morlock, 2008). Despite the media attention regarding the most severe incidents of behaviour, research indicates less disruptive behaviours can also have a serious impact on the school system (Little & Akin-Little, 2009). In addition, one of the main contributors to teachers’ psychological distress is the behavioural management of students (Everaert & van der Wolf, 2007; Lambert, McCarthy, O’Donnell, & Melendres, 2007).

There are a number of variables within the classroom environment, which have the potential to influence the likelihood of behaviour occurring or not occurring or increasing or decreasing (Alberto & Troutman, 2009; Emmer & Stough, 2001; Sutherland, Lewis-Palmer, Stichter, & Morgan, 2008). Teachers cannot ensure students behave appropriately. However, effective classroom management can increase the likelihood of students engaging and learning in the classroom (Akin-Little, Little, & Laniti, 2007; Little & Akin-Little, 2008). In addition, teachers’ training in classroom management as well as their beliefs about classroom management and the cause of student behaviour may have influence on classroom management practices (Little, Sterling, & Farrell, 1997). Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to explore teachers’ perceptions and attributions of school behaviour problems and classroom management. As beliefs and attributions are influenced by knowledge, teachers’ levels of formal training were examined as well as their perceptions of whether their training prepared them for the realities of managing a classroom.

CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT
Wang, Haertel, and Walberg (1993/1994) conducted an analysis of 50 years of research on factors that influence student learning and identified classroom management as the most important factor. They stated that “effective classroom management increases student engagement, decreases disruptive behaviours, and makes good use of instructional time” (Wang et al., p. 76). Conversely, ineffective classroom management has been shown to have a negative effect on students academically, behaviourally, and socially (Reinke, Lewis-Palmer, & Merrell, 2008).
There is no one definition of classroom management. Rather, there are a number of techniques and procedures that can be followed to help teachers better manage the classroom (Little & Akin-Little, 2009). However, given that students need to be engaged in order to learn and that disruptive behaviour can interfere with learning, effective strategies for promoting positive behaviour must be considered an important part of classroom management (Little & Akin-Little, 2008). Academic failure and problem behaviour have been found to be closely related (Sutherland et al., 2008) and academic and behavioural performances cannot be considered mutually exclusive entities (Webby & Lane, 2009). Therefore, a positive learning environment should not only focus on developing learning but also on social, emotional, and behavioural competencies (Hester, 2002).

Gable, Hester, Rock and Hughes (2009) conducted a review of empirical studies, literature reviews, and textbooks from the last 50 years regarding effective classroom management practices. Findings suggested a small number of age-appropriate rules defining behavioural expectations can be very effective in influencing classroom behaviour. Student awareness of the positive and negative consequences for rules following violation was also found to be an important variable. They also showed strong empirical evidence for the use of contingent praise, especially when used with other strategies (Gable et al., 2009). Despite this, research indicates that teachers are more likely to interact negatively with students with behavioural problems (Nelson & Roberts, 2000). Behaviour-specific praise has been shown to be the most effective procedure, yet its use by teachers is very low with research suggesting teachers use behaviour specific praise less than five percent of the time (Gable et al., 2009; Sutherland et al., 2008).

Reinforcement within a positive classroom environment helps to shape and influence students’ behaviour in positive ways (Akin-Little, Little, & Delligatti, 2004). Cameron and Pierce (1994), Eisenberger and Cameron (1996), Cameron, Banko, and Pierce (2001), Akin-Little, Eckert, Lovett, and Little (2004), and Little and Akin-Little (2009) all conducted meta-analyses and/or extensive reviews, and concluded there are no easily avoidable detrimental effects of extrinsic reward on student behaviour or performance. In spite of this evidence, some educators believe extrinsic reinforce have a negative effect on students’ intrinsic motivation to perform a reinforced task once the reinforcer for that task has been withdrawn (e.g., Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). One author has even gone so far as to state that the use of external rewards, even verbal praise, can be considered bribery to invoke temporary obedience and make children dependent on adult approval (Kohn, 1993). Best practice would suggest that students function optimally and therefore deserve a positive classroom environment based on sound empirical findings. There is a strong body of evidence to suggest the effective implementation of classroom management procedures based on positive reinforcement is efficacious and easily implemented by classroom teachers (Little & Akin-Little, 2009). The question, then, is what factors are interfering with the implementation of these techniques in schools?

TEACHERS’ PERCEPTIONS AND ATTRIBUTIONS

Miller (2003) writes “attributions of cause are not objective truths” (p. 145). In agreement with Miller, they are instead an attempt to interpret or explain the cause of their own or someone else’s behaviour. However, casual statements about the origins of behaviour are often created on the basis of one’s perceptions. This is especially so when circumstances are distressing or stressful. Rather than factual evidence, people tend to act on the basis of their beliefs and attributions (Miller, 2003). One way that we attempt to make sense of our social world is through the attribution of another’s behaviour to either internal (i.e., dispositional) or external (i.e., situational) causes. Internal attributions include causes such as mood, attitude, personality, ability, etc. External attributions, on the other hand, include causes such as the situational characteristics, luck, etc. Thus, if a teacher is to effectively address the problem of a student, he or she must determine whether the trouble is due to internal determinants (such as a lack of ability to control behaviour), or to situational determinants (such as a poor home environment) (Little et al., 1997).

Teachers’ belief systems, perspectives, attitudes, as well as their training and knowledge, influences what occurs in the classroom environment including the way they manage behaviour (Bester, 2007; Shindler, 2010). Vitaro, Tremblay, and Gagnon (1995) rated children in kindergarten and then again in first grade for aggression and hyperactivity. They found that teachers’ management style influenced the ratings they gave. These results suggest that teacher perceptions may moderate student behaviour.

Attribution theory provides a framework with which to understand how people interpret causes to behaviour and events (Little et al., 1997). According to Weiner (2005), attributions can be classified into three dimensions: locus (internal or external), stability (duration and likelihood of
remaining), and controllability (under individual’s control). How a person perceives behaviour determines how they will respond or react to it (Weiner, 2005). Therefore, teachers need to be aware and consider the role they play in maintaining inappropriate behaviour. Behaviours perceived as being less controllable are likely to elicit more pro-social behaviours from the teacher. However, if a student is perceived as intentionally behaving in a certain way then the response is likely to evoke negative reactions. For example, a teacher may perceive that a student’s behaviour is caused by parenting and that the parenting style is not likely to change, therefore the child has no control. This would be an external attribution which implies that the behaviour is stable and uncontrolled. The teacher, therefore, may view that anything that they do in the classroom would be futile, as it is not going to change the cause of the behaviour.

Teachers who tend to blame school behaviour problems on home factors such as parenting or internal characteristics of the student are more likely to seek services from outside the school to help ‘solve the problem’ (Athenasiou, Geil, Hazel, & Copeland, 2002; Miller, 2003). It allows them to shift responsibility away from themselves and the school and they escape having to manage the behaviour (Glynn & Berryman, 2005). In order to create an environment that is supportive, positive, collaborative, where everyone is valued (i.e., systems utilising the principals of positive behavioural support), teachers need to address their views, perceptions, and prejudices of students who display inappropriate behaviour (Grieve, 2009).

**FORMAL TEACHER TRAINING**

Given the evidence on the importance of classroom management, an important question must therefore be, “Are teachers adequately trained in effective classroom management practices?” A survey of elementary school teachers in the United States indicated that, more than 90% reported that they needed more training in classroom management (Jones & Jones, 2004). However, studies in New Zealand regarding teachers’ perceptions of whether their formal training prepared them for managing classrooms are sparse. In a study that surveyed 855 graduating secondary New Zealand teachers and 50 mentors, the new teachers repeatedly reported on their lack of training and need for more assistance in managing their classrooms. Some teachers’ responses specifically expressed dissatisfaction with their teacher preparatory programmes in providing training in classroom management (Anthony & Kane, 2008).

Additionally, for the purposes of this study, a brief review of the websites of teacher training in five major universities in New Zealand (Massey, Victoria, Canterbury, Otago, and Auckland) was undertaken that revealed substantial variability across programmes. A review of the courses offered for 2011 for each university using key words/terms such as behaviour management, behavioural difficulties, classroom management, management practices, effective pedagogical practices, positive environments, and/or climate, positive relationships indicated that teachers are not being offered courses which specifically examine classroom or behaviour management in detail, according to the course descriptions (Massey University, 2010; University of Auckland, 2010; University of Canterbury, 2010; University of Otago, 2010; Victoria University, 2010). Interestingly, one university offered courses in challenging behaviour, classroom management, and behaviour management; however these were designed for teacher-aides, not teachers (Massey University, 2011). Thus, the survey of the present study was supported by the current paucity of data in this area.

In addition, however, it should be noted that the Ministry of Education has recently implemented a new approach to the response to both severe behaviour disorders and low-level incidences of disruptive behaviour in the classroom. This approach, Positive Behaviour 4 Learning (PB4L) was agreed upon by 150 attendees at a summit convened in 2009 to discuss implementation of evidence-based intervention in the schools. The PB4L implementation began in 2010 over a five-year period. According to the Ministry of Education’s website, anticipated outcome data include a positive “school culture,” more positive interactions with whānau (family), less office referrals, and, important to this study, educators feeling more “confident and supported” in their ability to intervene successfully with problem behaviours. A search of the Ministry of Education’s website reveals little evidence at present of the success of this programme. Thus, this study is important as it provides an initial exploration of how some New Zealand teachers report their acceptability of this type of intervention —i.e., PB4L; (see http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/PositiveBehaviourForLearning/ThePlan/Overview.aspx).

**METHOD**

**Participants**

Participants were 42 teachers from five primary schools in the Hawke’s Bay area of New Zealand. The sample consisted of 81% women and 19% men while 16.7% identified themselves as Māori.
and 83.3% as European. Thirty-one percent of the participants taught years one and two students, 42.9% taught years three and four students, and 26.2% of the participants taught year five and six students. The qualifications of the participants included a diploma (14.3%), a Bachelor’s degree (69%), teaching training certificate (7.1%), Masters degree (4.8%), and postgraduate qualification (2.4%). Thirty-six participants completed their qualification in New Zealand, one in Australia, one in Australia and New Zealand, and four participants chose not to answer. Teaching experience of participants ranged from 6 months to 42 years with a mean teaching experience of 14.7 years. Note, curriculum of Australia teaching programmes were not examined.

Procedure and Materials
Seventy-two questionnaires were distributed across five schools with an overall response rate of 58%. The criterion for selection was that participants were currently teaching students on a regular basis. This included teachers who were in a job share position. Principals, Reading Recovery teachers, relief teachers, and management who did not teach were excluded from the study (n=7).

The questionnaire consisted of 20 questions; 11 using a 5-point Likert scale, six requiring a ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ answer, and three multiple choice questions. Each question also had space provided for the participants to make comments. The majority of the participants were personally approached and requested to participate in the study by the first author. However, a small number of questionnaires were left at each school for teachers who were not available during distribution. Each participant was verbally informed of the purpose of the study, the consent procedure, and issues around the use of the data and confidentiality. Participants were asked to return completed questionnaires to the researcher personally or to an envelope which had been left at the office of each school. Participants were informed that they could detach the consent form from the questionnaire prior to putting it in the envelope if they wished to remain anonymous.

RESULTS
Teachers’ perceptions of the cause of school problems (parenting, communication, mismanagement in the classroom, problem with the student, problem student cannot control, problem unlikely to change) were rated on a 5-point Likert scale from ‘Never’ to ‘Always’. Results indicated the majority of participants tended to respond conservatively by answering ‘sometimes’ except for “problem that is unlikely to change” in which the majority responded ‘rarely’. A large number of participants (76.2%) responded ‘sometimes’ to parenting with 19% answering “very often.” Interestingly, participants appeared to believe that problem behaviour was not something that students could not control with 40.5% answering ‘rarely’ and 45.2% answering ‘sometimes’. This also seemed to be similar with teacher perceptions of whether the problem is likely to change with 61.9% answering ‘rarely’. One comment was made for this question – “Depends on the child i.e. whether they have a label of ADHD.” Finally, 88.1% of teachers rated mismanagement in the classroom as “sometimes” or “very often” the cause of problem behaviour in the classroom (See Table 1).

Responses indicated that participants believed that behaviour serves a purpose for students. All participants who responded reported behaviour ‘sometimes’ (36%), ‘very often’ (36%), and ‘always’ (21%) has a function or serves a purpose. Teachers also appeared to believe that teacher behaviour...
can be very influential in the classroom with 59% of participants stating that their teaching practices can influence student behaviour to a considerable degree. In addition, 34% responded ‘almost always’ with only 7% ‘responding occasionally’.

**Positive Behavioural Interventions**

Teachers’ perceptions of positive behavioural interventions (PBI) were also explored. Participants were asked whether they felt that PBIs worked with all children in their class or if there were circumstances where they felt PBIs did not work for students. The majority of teachers (61%) reported that positive behavioural interventions do not work with 39% reporting they did work. Comments that were made by participants who responded that PBIs do not work included: “only sometimes” and “some children just do not value positive interventions”. Comments from participants who felt that PBIs did work included: “along with consistency”, “finding the right thing for the child”, “to certain degrees as everyone responds differently to intrinsic/extrinsic rewards”, “maybe a few exceptions”, “if used effectively and is purposeful for them”, “not all the time nor always by themselves”.

When asked how often circumstances arose where positive behavioural interventions DO NOT work, the majority of participants reported that these circumstances rarely (45%) or sometimes (41%) present themselves. Twelve percent indicated that there were no circumstances that prevented PBIs from being effective. Only 2% (one participant) indicated these circumstances were present ‘very often’. Despite only one participant responding that there are ‘very often’ circumstances which prevent positive behavioural interventions from working, the anecdotal comments appeared to contradict the empirical results. Many of these comments indicated doubt around the success of PBIs. Of those who responded ‘no’ or ‘rarely’ only one comment fit with the participant’s response to the question. The other comments indicated that the child is a reason why positive behavioural interventions would not work. Statements included: “the child is not willing to change”, or “the child does not find the reward or praise reinforcing”. There was no mention of the influence of the teacher’s behaviour as a factor in PBIs not working. Of those who responded PBIs sometimes work, a number of the comments reflected the teacher’s perception that home factors influence whether positive behavioural interventions work or not. A number of other comments indicated that some children “do not or cannot accept praise”, or that praise “has no perceived value”, or students “don’t care about positive behavioural interventions”. The one participant who indicated that PBIs very often do not work made the following comment: [Some students have] “no concept of what right/wrong is. They are unaware that their behaviour is a problem i.e. they keep re-offending”.

**Formal Teacher Training in Behaviour**

When asked about formal teaching training they may have had that was specific to behaviour management or classroom management, 21.4% of the teachers responded that they had taken such a course and 73.8% responded that they had not. An additional, 71.4% of participants indicated that behaviour management was a component of a course they took during their training. Of these, however, 42.9% indicated behaviour management constituted less than 10% of the content of the course and another 32.1% indicated it comprised 10% to 25% of the content. Only 3.6% indicated that it comprised more than half the content in the course. Only 16.2% of participants responded that they believed their formal teacher training had prepared them for managing behaviour in a classroom with 83.8% indicating their formal training was inadequate.

**Professional Development**

Eight-one percent of participants responded that they have received professional development specific to behaviour management since completing their teacher training. However, some participants questioned the utility of this training. For example, one participant stated professional development was “often too PC and stepped around real classroom issues”. With regard to the frequency of professional development opportunities, 47.6% responded that they were ‘rarely’ offered professional development in behaviour management.

Despite a large number of participants indicating that they did not feel their formal teacher training adequately prepared them, and the reported lack of professional development, a large percentage (77.5%) still felt confident or very confident in managing classroom behaviour problems. However, 23.5% answered they were only ‘very little’ or ‘somewhat confident’.

**DISCUSSION**

The purpose of the current study was to examine teachers’ perceptions of the cause of school behavioural problems, and the effectiveness of positive behavioural interventions. It also examined the level of training participants have received in behaviour management. Results suggest that New Zealand teachers tend to attribute the cause of school behaviour problems primarily to external factors such as home circumstances.
and parenting. More specifically, data suggest that teachers’ perception of the problem behaviour was within the child, able to be controlled by students, and able to be changed over time. These results are generally in agreement with previous research (see Little et al., 1997).

The way in which the cause of behaviour is perceived influences problem solution. If we perceive that the cause is beyond our influence then we are not likely to look for ways in which we can positively change the behaviour (Weiner, 2004). If we perceive that a child is able to control his/her behaviour and when behavioural problems occur, we are likely to presume that the child has the capacity to change his/her behaviour in some way. Unfortunately, when these perceptions exist adults may take a negative approach (i.e., punishment) to dealing with the behaviour (Weiner, 2004).

Effective classroom management benefits not only students with behavioural and academic problems but all students in the classroom. Targeting classroom management as an intervention as opposed to individual reductive approaches (Little, Akin-Little, & Cook, 2009) has the advantage of reducing current problems as well as helping to prevent future problems (Reinke et al., 2008). The majority of the teachers in the current study felt that mismanagement contributes only sometimes to the problem behaviours that present themselves in their classrooms. This is a concern as data indicates mismanagement in the classroom is a major factor contributing to behavioural problems. Couple that with results indicating that the majority of teachers do not have extensive training in classroom behaviour management and one may surmise this is a reason why children, particularly minority children, are not provided with appropriate intervention that ameliorates emotional, behavioural and/or academic difficulties. The data from this survey indicates that the teachers responding to this study do not believe their behaviour is a factor in whether or not a child behaves appropriately and that they are competent in classroom management techniques even with little training. However, since reportedly they have very little training in classroom management, their beliefs appear to be suspect. Exploring these issues was beyond the scope of the current study, but is one that is recommended as a focus for future researchers.

Research indicates that positive behavioural interventions (PBI) and positive classroom environments can positively influence behaviour (Jones & Jones, 2004). In spite of an extensive body of research supporting the efficacy of PBI and the behavioural theory that underlies this approach (Simonson & Sugai, 2009), the results of the current study indicate that a large number of teachers do not believe they work. Comments made by participants illustrate the perception that factors associated with the student as the main reason why positive behavioural interventions do not work with all children. Notable, however, many of the responses indicated that teachers perhaps do not understand the term ‘positive behavioural interventions’ or how to implement them effectively. According to Akin-Little and colleagues (2004), “… it is the practice and not the principles that are suspect, and open to misapplication and abuse …” (p. 339). The authors suggest that what is needed is more training in the implementation and delivery of behavioural approaches in the classroom. Despite the lack of confidence in positive behavioural interventions, teachers again stated that they were confident overall in managing classroom behaviour problems. Further examination would be needed to explore what strategies they use as alternatives to positive behavioural interventions however.

Formal Teacher Training and Professional Development

According to Jones and Jones (2004) one of the reasons that classroom management continues to be a problem is that teachers do not appear to receive training or information regarding the research on effective classroom management practices. The results of the current study highlighted the lack of training the teachers receive in behaviour management. Only a small number of teachers indicated that they have completed university papers (i.e., courses) in their formal training that were specific to behaviour or classroom management. A larger portion of the participants stated that behaviour/classroom management was a component of papers, however most indicated that it was a small component. On reviewing the university papers (courses) available at present, there are very few, if any, papers (courses) that are specific to behaviour. Among those specific to behaviour, most appeared to be at a graduate level, and optional.

A common theme which emerged from the comments in the current study was that much of the learning regarding behaviour/classroom management comes from on-the-job experience and observation of experienced teachers. The difficulty with this is that few beginning teachers may be fortunate enough to have the opportunity to observe teachers who have good management practices as there are no procedures in place to guarantee such an experience. Unfortunately, good intentions, common sense, and experience do not necessarily lead to good practice. Experience can also have the disadvantage of perpetuating the use of ineffective strategies and practice (Shindler, 2010).
Most teachers in this study had received professional development since completing their formal training; however, some teachers had not received any. This is concerning, as acquired knowledge needs to be built and expanded upon. Unfortunately, results indicated that the professional development priority for schools and teachers is aligned more toward curriculum development than behaviour and effective classroom management strategies. Specifically, participants stated that of all the professional development they had received, topics related to curriculum consisted of 40-100% of their experiences, as opposed to behaviour management which ranged from zero to 15% of their professional development training, although teachers appear to experience work-related stress at higher levels than many other professions (Lambert et al., 2007), with one of the main contributors being behaviour management. Often classroom management is viewed as ways of disciplining inappropriate behaviour rather than ways of supporting positive behaviour (Brownell & Walther-Thomas, 2001). Teachers may need to re-think their beliefs and perceptions of what classroom management is. If they continue to look for times students are engaging in inappropriate behaviour the behaviour is more likely to increase and/or escalate. By shifting the focus to consequences for positive behaviour, it creates a positive environment and role-models positive ways of interacting (Drasgow, 1997).

As noted in the introduction, however, the Ministry of Education has begun a focus on a more primary prevention model by the implementation of PB4L. There is a definite focus by the Ministry of Education in New Zealand to train and support educators to adopt a more positive, data-based approach to the amelioration of behavioral difficulties in the classroom. These survey results appear to indicate that for these respondents at least, there is more work to be done at both the school level and, most importantly, the level of teacher training in New Zealand for teachers to be both knowledgeable and confident in an more positive approach to the management of classroom behaviour see http://www.minedu.govt.nz/theMinistry/EducationInitiatives/PositiveBehaviourForLearning/ThePlan/Overview.aspx). It should be noted though that it does not appear clear that the Ministry of Education, in implementing this programme, has made adequate efforts to ensure intervention integrity and meaningful outcome data collection.

**Limitations**

While the results of the current study offer some valuable perspectives on teachers’ perceptions of student misbehaviour as well as their training and practice in classroom/behaviour management, there are limitations in the current research which need to be considered for future studies. First, the sample used in the current study was relatively small (n=42) and from one region of the North Island of New Zealand. A larger, more diverse sample is recommended in future research. The structure of the materials used also presented some challenges. The current study used a mixture of question types, for example, a 5-point Likert scale for a number of questions, questions requiring YES or NO answers, and multiple choice questions. This made some comparisons difficult because of the different scaling. In addition, using a 5-point Likert scale allowed participants to answer conservatively (i.e., ‘sometimes’) which limited the need to take a definitive position. It was also noted that in many cases the responses given on the Likert scale contradicted comments that were made to the free-response portion of the questionnaire. It is likely that there is variability regarding people’s perceptions of the definition of school behaviour problems. Therefore, individual differences in the perceptions of the definition may have influenced the way participants responded. Finally, it is very important to note that many teachers do not have training in specific classroom management techniques at the undergraduate level in either a didactic or practical application. Many teachers may not be fully aware of the extent of positive behavioural interventions, assuming that this merely includes praise and reward. Thus, teachers could have been responding to the survey without fully comprehending what exactly was being asked of them.

**SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS**

Teachers play a crucial role in the development of children. Research indicates that burnout, emotional and mental exhaustion, and low efficacy of teachers impacts on the relationship of teachers with their students and the quality of their teaching (Pas, Bradshaw, Hershfeldt, & Leaf, 2010). The results of the current study highlight inadequacies in formal teacher training and ongoing professional development in the area of classroom management in New Zealand. Given that research indicates that teachers find managing behaviour one of the more challenging parts of their role, a review of formal teacher training and adequate ongoing support and training must be considered essential for teachers. Though not specifically addressed, these results also have implications for behavioural consultation as consultants need to be acutely aware of the limitations in terms of teacher knowledge, training and support for these types of interventions.
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AUTHORS’ PROFILES

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I thought this was Social Studies, not English, Miss! Improving students’ attitudes to reading and writing in Year 9 and 10 Social Studies

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ABSTRACT
Low levels of literacy engagement by Years 9 and 10 students impact on their achievement in curriculum subjects such as Social Studies in New Zealand secondary schools. The majority of students entering secondary school possess sufficient foundation skills for further scaffolded subject literacy instruction, but some consistently resist or refuse to engage with text. Faced with this, the teacher works increasingly harder to compensate for reluctant readers and writers. This is the story of one teacher’s changing practice as the result of professional learning in The Secondary Literacy Project (Ministry of Education, 2009-11) which has resulted in a substantive change in her Social Studies classrooms, with “resistive” (Tovani, 2000, p. 14) readers now significantly more motivated and engaged in negotiating and responding to challenging texts.

Practice paper

Keywords: Literacy engagement, social studies, student attitudes

INTRODUCTION
The current iteration of the Secondary Literacy Project [SLP] was implemented by the Ministry of Education at the beginning of 2009 in order to improve achievement outcomes for students having to retrieve, record and use information in complex ways in text-rich subjects. Independent reading and writing skills are vital prerequisites for these kinds of activities. A particular goal in the project was raising the literacy capacity of underachieving Māori and Pasifika students. This paper documents the approach taken by one teacher involved in the SLP in the central North Island. Kate, a teacher with seven years’ experience, shares her experiences of students’ changing attitudes towards reading and writing in her Years 9 and 10 Social Studies classes as a result of her new understandings about adolescent literacy acquired during the project. The teacher compares her approaches before and after her new pedagogical learning and evaluates the improvement in students’ attitudes to reading and writing in her classes as a result of the interventions put in place. At the same time, Kate is mindful of the need to maintain the curricular integrity of the compulsory junior secondary school subject - Social Studies.

Teachers are charged with negotiating and reconciling multiple and sometimes conflicting demands placed on them. The demands include current educational theories; political agendas articulated as education policies by such offices as the Ministry of Education and The New Zealand Qualifications Authority; school policies; and pressures from parents and students. At the beginning of 2010, Kate was very aware of her need to implement The New Zealand Curriculum [NZC] (Ministry of Education, 2007) in Social Studies, such as the conceptually-based strands and achievement objectives, values and perspectives, as well as the social inquiry process. In addition, Kate needed to integrate into her planning the generic requirements of the NZC such as the key competencies, current pedagogical approaches such as differentiation, co-construction and teaching as inquiry, as well as the school’s literacy improvement initiative. By the beginning of 2011, Kate was ready to integrate these demands and implement them in her own way. In effect, she was negotiating the demands of the policy makers, mediating between policy & practice (Brain, Reid & Comerford Boyes, 2006). Specifically, Kate was reflecting, juggling, negotiating, questioning, conforming, rejecting all within the constraints of resources such as timetabling, students’ resources, and teachers’ resources. What follows is Kate’s story of how she turned resistive readers and writers into engaged, motivated readers, set within the context of the SLP and educational theories.

KATE’S KURA
Kate teaches in an urban, co-educational, low decile secondary school with a wide ethnic mix. In 2011, the school’s role is 33% Māori, 31% New Zealand European/Pākehā, 8% Pasifika and 28% other ethnic groups. The school has traditionally had a large proportion of resistive readers and
Therefore was invited to be part of the SLP. Broadly speaking, resistant readers are those who are able to read, comprehend and write responsively, but who choose not to, and resist teachers’ attempts engage them through text in subject classrooms (Tovani 2000). Kate prefers to use the term ‘reluctant’ readers.

The current kura is Kate’s second school in her teaching career. In both schools, she has shown initiative in teaching a broad range of subjects and in consistently striving to find new ways to improve her practice in order to improve outcomes for her students. Throughout, Kate has actively sought new professional learning and opportunities to apply that learning in her practice.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ABOUT READING IN SECONDARY SCHOOL SOCIAL STUDIES CLASSROOMS

At secondary school, students go from class to class (five or six in a day) and typically experience three to five periods of Social Studies a week. In any one day, the students are likely to encounter different teacher expectations about their ability to engage purposefully with text as they move from class to class. In fact, most students of Year 9 students are able to decode and comprehend independently ideas within a sentence and a paragraph that contains one idea. But do they understand how the set learning task requires them to read and write to develop connected conceptual understandings as required within the Social Studies achievement objectives of the NZC? Can they build new knowledge and understandings, purposefully analyse and evaluate the usefulness of what they are reading, and reconstruct the information in ways that differ from that set out in the text? The students must be able to comprehend text beyond literal levels into deeper and inferred levels of meaning, and to use the information in a number of ways because, in the Social Sciences, inferencing is instrumental to conceptual learning. The students need to engage deeply with primary and secondary source data to inquire into a topic or issue, and to provide evidence for writing a generalisation or paragraph or completing a graphic organiser.

Traditionally, Social Studies textbooks have been a major classroom resource though that is changing with the increased use of the internet and a plethora of audio and visual resources. Social Studies texts are typically complex and colourful, with pages full of visuals such as photos, maps, graphs and cartoons, blocks of continuous and non-continuous text, as well as activities and tasks. The textbook author seems to include on the page as much of what they believe is important for students to know and to understand.

Having to negotiate such complex texts, with little instructional scaffolding, can generate student resistance to reading them. The teacher has little understanding of why students cannot see the obvious in texts that he or she intuitively understands and can conclude, sometimes erroneously, that these students either can’t read, or that they dislike Social Studies, or that they have discipline issues.

In secondary school Social Studies, students are generally reading complex information texts rather than personal narratives or fiction. Students need to read purposefully: that is, know clearly, prior to close reading of the text, what they have to find out, how to find it, organise it and record it, and how to reconstruct it to show they have understood it.

KATE’S INITIAL PRACTICE

Like many Social Studies teachers, Kate traditionally supported her students in their reading in a number of ways. One approach was to use easy texts that didn’t require students to really think, or she would strategically unpack the text and respond purposefully to its contents on the students’ behalf. She would create worksheets and activities that would be manageable for weaker readers. Kate was keenly aware of students’ typical ploy to feign inability/inadequacy as an early consequence of her SLP work. For example, students would complain the work was too hard, ask the teacher to summarise the reading, tell them the main points, write them on the board which the students would copy into their folders or exercise books – game over - rather than having to do the reading and retrieve information for themselves. This ‘social contract’ or informal expectation does not just occur in New Zealand schools. A US study of middle schools by Greenleaf, Schoenbach, Czikó & Mueller (2001) reported that students are very clever at faking ‘reading’ by knowing...

... how long to wait before turning a page to fool the teacher into thinking you are reading. Anyone who has listened to young people brag about such exploits cannot help but be impressed by their strategic intelligence and worried about the colossal waste of energy expended (p.80)1.

Kate frequently heard students say, “I thought this was Social Studies not English, Miss!” and “Why do we have to do this, Miss?” when she required them to read a Social Studies text or resource. Just as students have perceived literacy to be the realm of English teachers, Social Studies teachers have

often thought it was not their role to teach literacy skills (i.e. how to read and write “properly” for Social Studies). Indeed, there is anecdotal evidence that they have often expressed the view that the English teacher was responsible for inculcating such skills. A further complication is that, in the absence of knowledge about adolescent literacy, teachers have generally adopted a dichotomous view of students’ literacy in their classes – those who can read and those who can’t. This viewpoint regards literacy as a threshold competency, rather than as a nuanced progression, that differentiates as students journey through to senior year levels, and into greater subject speciality.

KATE’S NEW LEARNING

Kate engaged in professional learning through the SLP from 2010, as well as mentoring in the conceptual-learning approach to teaching Social Studies. Her work with the SLP made Kate aware that she was having to do too much additional work to support her students and that this would have to change. Kate realised that she was rewriting the texts students were to read and creating worksheets that made the work easier for the students. Like many teachers of resistive readers, she realised that she was doing much of the work her students should be doing and needed to redress the balance.

A key aspect of the SLP was to gather baseline data. Kate and her colleagues started analysing literacy data from the school’s Canterbury Tests (CEM) and e-asTtle tests which provided detailed information at whole cohort, class and individual student levels. Realising that the majority of the students could decode and construct meaning that is, they could read, Kate noted that a number of her students were, however, reluctant to do so. The SLP provided Kate with evidence of effective practice drawing on experiences of other teachers. In addition, she read and gained insights from Effective pedagogy for social sciences/Tikanga-a-iwi. Best evidence synthesis (BES) iteration (Atikken & Sinnema, 2008). The four BES mechanisms or guiding principles provide a ‘framework’ which Kate ‘hangs her Social Studies on’. When she explicitly planned for the four mechanisms - connection to students’ lives, alignment of learning experiences to important outcomes, building and sustaining a learning community and designing learning experiences that interest students – Kate found that student engagement improved. Students who understand that their learning is relevant, important and beneficial are better focused and more inclined to persist with tasks they find challenging. The Effective Literacy Strategies (Ministry of Education, 2004) provided examples of suitable literacy strategies whilst the Te Kotahitanga Project Phase One (Bishop, Berryman, Tāikiwai & Richardson, 2003) challenged Kate’s assumptions of cultural views of Māori learners.

BEST PEDAGOGIC PRACTICE

A key feature of the SLP’s best pedagogic practice relevant to facilitate learning from Social Studies texts, is the application of a purposeful inquiry methodology to reading and writing. This supports the finding and processing information aspects of the social inquiry process (Ministry of Education, 2008). The purposeful inquiry method used by the SLP requires that, firstly, a reading purpose statement is set at the beginning of the lesson prior to reading. This explains what content information students are required to find in the text. Secondly, the teacher sets a small number of focus questions - open inquiry questions (sometimes negotiated with the students) to help guide students to:

(i) locate, retrieve and organise relevant information (for example to classify or categorise);
(ii) monitor whether they accurately record relevant information; and
(iii) monitor their understandings against the purpose articulated at the beginning of the task.

Thirdly, the teacher helps students to construct a way of recording information that reflects the reading purpose (e.g. using the text’s sub-headings in an info-graphic). This process requires students to make their own relevant notes, perhaps as a graphic organiser, rather than copy out ‘stuff’ from the text. These steps are important elements of an effective literacy instructional approach.

The above purposeful inquiry methodology activates all four components of literacy (reading, writing, listening and speaking). Students are encouraged to read, write, speak and listen alone and in groups in order to negotiate meanings, explore ideas and test understandings. This is a dynamic process that is managed by the teacher and changes his/her role in the classroom. The teacher focuses on scaffolding students into Social Studies literacy practices, using relevant and challenging text to grow deeper conceptual understandings from content knowledge. Retaining factual content knowledge is regarded as less important than developing the higher level thinking skills needed to articulate conceptual understandings. These conceptual understandings emerge, however, from subject content knowledge. This approach resonates with the concept-based approach to learning now advocated for effective pedagogy in Social Studies (Milligan & Wood, 2010; Ministry of Education, 2009).
The purposeful inquiry approach insists that teachers hold high expectations for students’ achievement through a literacy-focused approach. It is pivotal that teachers hold high expectations of their students, a point reinforced strongly by student voices recorded in the Te Kotahitanga Project (Bishop et al., 2003). Underpinning this strategic approach to literacy learning in Social Studies is a clear non-negotiable expectation that students will become capably, that is, independently, literate and so are able to read challenging text.

CHANGES IN KATE’S PRACTICE

As a result of her engagement in the SLP and the introduction of the conceptually based NZC, Kate began to change her practice by introducing a number of different expectations and behaviours. Kate placed an expectation on all her students at the beginning of their first year (Year 9) that they would read every day in her class. Often the text was not an easy one, but it would be one that they could learn from. She selected challenging texts that would focus learning towards meeting the ‘big idea’ or achievement objective that was the focus of the Social Studies learning. She refused to engage in the argument that “I thought this was English, not Social Studies, Miss”. She made it very clear that resistance was futile. One student commented:

There’s a lot more reading than I expected but I got used to that. Miss doesn’t let us stop reading.

Kate now very clearly establishes the purpose of the reading with her students, using the purposeful inquiry method introduced in the SLP. She believes that it is more effective for student engagement if they are taught to write their own purpose for reading – and thereby turning it into an inquiry task, not just a literacy task. Kate teaches her students strategies to navigate texts: that they will find challenging and will not otherwise resist engaging, saying they have read it, but don’t get (Tovani, 2000). For example, Kate challenged her students with an eight-page article from The National Geographic on the Chernobyl Disaster as part of a unit addressing the big idea of people’s response to challenge and crisis. As one of Kate’s students expressed:

I feel more knowledgeable after reading the article and I probably wouldn’t have understood as much without the reading strategies.

At the end of the [National Geographic] article, I felt proud of myself as I didn’t believe that I would even finish reading half of it.

Kate reflects on the literacy approach she has used to support Social Studies learning by providing students with strategies to navigate texts:

In the past I have simply made assumptions that all students can navigate visually complex texts, make links between images, graphs, tables and text, and that they can make sense of the layout of the book. After struggling with students who weren’t getting as much out of the texts as I expected, in the past two years I have explicitly taught students how to navigate unfamiliar texts. I now have students who can find their way around complex pages with ease, make connections and are able to move onto higher order tasks, simply because they now understand how the page is put together. Also they understand the importance of doing that before they start reading. They don’t assume that they’re stupid because they don’t get the book. They start looking for the cues that will show them how to find their way around this text.

Critical literacy is also a skill which Kate teaches her students. When students understand that writers construct text for a purpose, they can begin to look at the differences in texts aimed at different groups of people:

I am constantly asking my students who manufactured the text, who the text is aimed at and how they can know that. Then the question becomes how does that change the nature of the information you will get from the text? When students realise they have the power to rank texts as to their usefulness, the text doesn’t scare them anymore. The students are the ones in control.
To what extent have these changed expectations and strategies improved students’ attitudes to reading and writing in Kate’s Social Studies classes? Kate’s observations of the students in the classroom show that students now read more complex material and more of it, are more willing to read, read more independently and exhibit greater levels of self-efficacy, and have developed deeper conceptual understandings and higher order thinking skills. Kate’s conclusions are supported by students’ results in the 2010 pre- and post-e-ASSE testing which showed a 2 sub-scale points), Evidence which supports changes in students’ attitudes towards reading more challenging texts and in writing are also heard in student conversations, for example:

One thing I learned was to read the purpose for the reading before I read the article so I knew what I was looking for when I answered the questions.

I like the hard reading even though sometimes I need help to understand it. When I finish the hard reading, I feel really brainy.

Other positive outcomes of using a literacy approach to teaching Social Studies include Kate’s careful planning, integrating the many demands, writing clear literacy learning outcomes that sit alongside Social Studies learning outcomes, the use of literacy templates, and being able to hand over the responsibility for learning to the students.

MAINTAINING THE INTEGRITY OF SOCIAL STUDIES

Kate has maintained the integrity of Social Studies in her programme by focusing clearly on the concepts within the Level four achievement objectives (Ministry of Education, 2007) and selecting one as the focus for each term. She develops the selected conceptual understandings (big ideas) with her class by using the social inquiry approach to encourage students to ask questions, retrieve information, process the information using a variety of strategies, explore values and perspectives, write generalisations to demonstrate their understanding of the big ideas, and reflect on their findings (Ministry of Education, 2008). This is facilitated by her use of literacy strategies to engage the students with the source materials. Moreover, she provides a differentiated approach where students have a level of choice within a range of activities, carefully structured around the higher order thinking skills of Bloom’s Taxonomy. The choice and constant feedback further empowers her students to attempt and succeed at tasks which scaffold their learning towards the conceptual understandings. All these design elements mirror current practices in Social Studies (Ministry of Education, 2007; 2008; 2009).

By challenging and extending her students beyond their presumed capabilities, Kate is also opening her students to the specialised language, conceptual understandings and discourses of Social Studies. This is an essential but often undervalued role of a teacher. Whitty (2010), drawing upon the work of educational sociologists Michael Young and Basil Bernstein, strongly argues that students from relatively educationally-disadvantaged backgrounds must be enabled to access the “powerful knowledge” (p. 31) of curriculum subject discourses which they are not likely to receive in their homes. Subject discourse consists of both the specialist language and the ways of thinking, knowing and doing that are specific to a discipline, and which students must master in order to succeed. By enabling all students to access subject discourses, social divisions can be reduced with students being able to achieve and continue to higher levels of education in that subject or discipline.

In order to achieve Whitty’s goals, Moje (2006) and Luke (1995-96) argue that students are required to independently reproduce subject content knowledge using the subject’s discourse; that is, to be an historian or geographer is to be able to read, write and think in accordance with discourse conventions of these subjects. This helps explain why literacy is a particular challenge, and for some students an impenetrable barrier, to working successfully in subject domains. Students may be capable readers of narrative texts (for example), but are unable to communicate receptively or productively with text written in the specialist discourse of a given subject. This failure locks students out of further substantive learning, and academic progress in that subject (Luke 1995-96).

Kate has responded to the complex challenge of teaching Year 9 and 10 students with sufficient skills and strategies to decode and comprehend text at literal or surface levels, for example to find information in response to a specific question, but who are ill-equipped for increasingly complex subject reading and writing tasks demanded by subject discourse conventions. The transition from Year 8 into Year 9 is described by Luke and Woods (2009) as a threshold students are expected to cross into the specialist registers and discourses of disciplinary knowledge contained in written subject texts, and in teachers’ oral instructional discourse. Kate has expected her Year 9 and 10 students to read increased volumes
of challenging texts written within the discourse conventions of Social Studies. In order to cross that discourse threshold, she has adopted an instructional approach that scaffolds students into these texts: enabling them to comprehend and understand content knowledge to depths greater than previously when she had compensated for her students’ apparent lack of literacy abilities, by doing much of the work for them.

CONCLUSION
Just as adolescent literacy is regarded by the SLP as a progression rather than a competency, Kate’s professional practice is constantly progressing. This reflects her deep thinking and concern for her students, and is evidenced by a creative problem-solving approach to her work. By changing the way she approaches literacy, Kate has found it relatively simple to incorporate all of what she considers to be key aspects of current educational theory, both in general and specific to Social Studies, into a very straightforward framework that supports students to do the work based on a structured approach to a challenging text. Further, her students’ improved engagement in Social Studies and willingness to tackle challenging texts has positive consequences for both the students and Kate. Students now understand that literacy is more than English, and that it happens across the curriculum, including their learning in Social Studies. By sharing her story, Kate hopes that she will inspire other teachers to adopt this approach in their Social Studies classrooms, because as Renner so aptly observed in relation to changes in Social Studies education in the 1970s, educational innovations tend to spread “homophilously” (1976, p. 110); that is, teachers learn best from fellow teachers rather than from persons holding a higher or lower status.

REFERENCES


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ABSTRACT
This paper explores Hero Stories, a different narrative approach developed to support a child with autism to gain self-control and allow him to navigate his world as a competent and capable learner. It examines the development and use of ‘Hero Stories books’ as a strategy for assisting a child with autism to cope with stressful situations within the home and school, and explores how these stories can contribute to enhancing a child’s sense of themselves as thinkers and powerful learners, in charge of their lives.

Practice paper

Keywords: Autism, coping strategies, stories

INTRODUCTION
The impact of autism on a child, his/her family, the community, and educators can be significant. Children with autism have varied learning styles, differences in communication, and social skills, making it very hard to effectively work through difficulties and to move into a situation where learning opportunities can occur, or to create a more positive situation generally (Hanley-Hochdorfer, Bray, Kehle & Elinoff, 2010; Schopler, 1995). Stories have been used in education for a number of years with a range of formats and purposes, including enhancing children’s learning opportunities and as a tool to cope in stressful situations.

Learning stories are a narrative, formative assessment framework that are based on the notion of narratives that capture multiple voices, foreground the value of learning dispositions, acknowledge children’s strengths and interests, and make transparent the teacher’s actions in teaching contexts (Carr, Hatherly, Lee & Ramsey, 2003). Social Stories were developed by Carol Gray and have been used as an intervention tool successfully for a number of years. The framework for Social Stories has specific criteria to follow to support individuals who have autism to cope in certain situations (Gray, 2010). Hero Stories are founded on a credit-based view similar to Learning Stories, with a focus on coping, not unlike Social Stories. However, the difference with these stories is that they aim to support the child to develop and learn coping strategies, and promote the child’s own voice. Building on the concept of positive self-talk, they provide a framework that prompts the child to imagine situations that maybe stressful and to practice coping through being the ‘Hero’ of the story. By repetition of the stories, the child is supported to learn what to do outside of the immediate difficult situation. The coping skills can then be drawn on when needed and later generalised to a range of situations. These stories respond to individuals’ needs, are flexible and represent a positive option for supporting children with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to learn self-regulating strategies.

STORIED APPROACHES
Stories can include commentary on the role of social partners, practices and tools. They can provide a motivating tool for children to return to at times of uncertainty, developing default responses in the presence of uncertain learning opportunities and circumstances. “Stories are powerful research tools. They provide us with a picture of real people in real situations, struggling with real problems” (Witherell & Noddings, 1991, p.280). Bruner (1996) points out that stories can describe not only what does happen, but also what ought to happen. They can set out what is of value, what is expected. Carr, Smith, Duncan, Jones, Lee, and Marshall (2010) argue that stories can document ‘what we do here’ and ‘what we ought to do here’ in a variety of settings, including early childhood settings, schools and homes. When they contain examples of success and competence they can enhance children’s sense of themselves as thinkers and powerful learners, providing a navigational device that assists them to be more in charge of their lives. Stories are more powerful when they contain links to the child’s own life experiences and to future possibilities, rather than being documentation of a specific experience (Margrain, 2010).

SOCIAL STORIES
Carol Gray’s Social Stories were developed in the United States of America during 1991 (Gray, 1994; 2010). They have been used in a
variety of forms of intervention for children with autism. She describes Social Stories as a strategy that provides individuals who have autism with accurate information regarding situations they encounter, and argues that these stories have had a positive impact socially and academically for some individuals with autism. Social Stories are written in response to individual children’s needs, which are identified in a number of ways, including social skill assessments. The story may, depending on the need, emphasise social skills, teach routines, teach academic material and address a wide range of challenging behaviours. Social Stories have a particular sentence structure: descriptive, perspective, directive, and control sentences. More importance is placed on the descriptive and perspective sentences, with a ratio of at least three to five descriptive/perspective sentences for every directive and/or control sentence. This ratio must be maintained regardless of the length of the social story. Gray (1994; 2010) states this is based on the theory that the fewer directive and control sentences, the more opportunities for the individual to determine his/her own response to the situation, although some children will require more directive statements than others. Gray believes that Social Stories may not need to be illustrated to be effective and that at times, illustrations can be too distracting and defining for some children. However, there is a view that these stories can be more effective for some children with autism, providing visual images focused on what people are thinking and doing (Chan & O’Reilly, 2008; Spencer, Simpson & Lynch, 2008; Thiemann & Goldstein, 2001; Margrain, 2010).

BACKGROUND TO THE CASE STUDY

Sam had undergone many interventions by professionals during his lifetime, some from a medical perspective, others with an educational focus. He also had difficulty interacting with others, and during times of frustration or anxiety he would hurt others around him. When he was five years old his mother was told by a medical professional that he had definite behavioural problems, delayed thought/verbal expression, and a lack of emotional perception of self and others. He also had delayed gross and fine motor skills and was unable to socialise with his peers. The professional diagnosis was autism. At the time of this case study Sam was presenting with some very challenging behaviours, and another medical professional suggested to his mother that she should put him on medication for his abnormal behaviours. She did not see this as a good option for him. Sam had difficulty with expressive communication processes, and found communication difficult, having particular difficulty expressing his feelings, such as when he was unwell, if he was worried about something, or explaining when he was frustrated or angry. Coping with daily situations and transitions had become very stressful for Sam and challenging for those people in his life trying to cope with his behaviour and to understand him. Sam’s mother was aware from his behaviour that at times he was unhappy and distressed, and this was impacting on his relationships at home, at school, and within the community. She sought a referral through The New Zealand Society for Intellectually Handicapped (IHC), seeking help from their Behaviour Support Service.

METHODOLOGY

This was a case study about the development and use by one family of ‘Hero Stories’ as a coping strategy with a young child who has autism. It explored how ‘Hero Stories’ were developed in this one case, and how they are being used by the family. It was written primarily from the viewpoint of the parent, and is essentially the mother’s story, but it also includes other perspectives. The purpose of the study was to explore the use of Hero Stories as an alternative communication strategy with a young child who has autism.

THE DEVELOPMENT OF HERO STORIES

Hero Stories were an idea jointly developed by Sam’s mother alongside the IHC’s Behaviour Support Service team after they had received a referral for Sam, completed a comprehensive assessment, and developed a multi-element plan. The main issue identified at the time was Sam’s inability to cope during some situations, and, as a result, he would try to hurt himself and others around him. One of the team members met with Sam’s mother and the school staff on a monthly basis, and also met with her at her home, as a number of the issues causing concern at home were different from those at school. It was at one of these meetings at home that the concept of Hero Stories was discussed as a form of narrative documentation with dispositional potential and ‘navigational’ elements for children with learning difficulties.

The basis of these books came from the concept of Gray’s Social Stories, however, the Hero Stories books have a more flexible approach. They are still written in response to individual situations, and in this instance were developed as part of a response to a referral for behaviour support intervention. The IHC assessment plan identified the need for Sam to learn coping strategies. Hero Stories came about as a way to support Sam in practicing what to do in a given situation, before he was faced with it. The notion of priming is inherent within the
Hero Story books with a focus on understanding others’ perspectives, feelings and strategies for use in the future embedded in each of them (Scattone, Tingstrom & Wilczynski, 2006).

The IHC team member, along with Sam’s mother, identified a number of antecedents and they discussed how they could prime Sam to have a strategy which he could draw on when these occurred, so that he could have control over his behaviour. The concept of positive self-talk was discussed as a tool that could be included in the Hero Stories (Boutot, 2009). They believed that if they could teach Sam to use this strategy during difficult situations by recalling the messages in the Hero Story books then he might be able to cope better in response to them. Sam appeared to be a visual learner; he found written text uninteresting, but he enjoyed pictures, and was able to focus using visual clues (Schneider & Goldstein, 2009). The concept of using positive self-talk was introduced in the books by using speech bubbles, making Sam the hero of the stories, and portraying him solving problems in a positive manner. Sam’s mother would read the books with him most days, at no particular set time and they became a natural way for Sam to practice what to do in response to a difficult situation in advance.

**Figure 1. The Breakfast Time Script.**

**Breakfast Time**

This book was the first to be developed and aimed to support Sam in learning the skills to share and control his frustration while the family had breakfast.

**Page 1**

This page outlines the antecedent. It uses short statements and the visual cue of Sam and his brother together.

**Page 2**

This page outlines a clear statement of feelings. “Sam is upset.” This is important to help Sam learn about emotions. The first self-regulator statement of “Stop!” is introduced.

**THE HERO STORY BOOKS**

The Hero Stories books were initially written by Sam’s mother and a member of the IHC team, and later, by Sam himself. Over time, these books continued to develop and evolve to suit Sam’s requirements. The original research focused on the use of these books both within the school and home settings, and the early books formed the data for this paper. The first book developed was about breakfast time at Sam’s home. Breakfast time was identified as an antecedent; a situation that was regularly stressful for Sam. During breakfast time Sam didn’t want anyone to look at him and he would build a structure with the cereal boxes, so that his brother and mother could not see him. This created a lot of difficulty for Sam, his younger brother, and his mother, as no one else could share the cereal at breakfast time without causing Sam great anxiety. It was decided to develop a book about this situation. “We knew what we wanted and (IHC team member) figured the outline and I took the photos and brought them back and she helped me set them up” (Parent).

Figure 1 sets out the script of this book. The first photo is an image of Sam eating with his brother. The other photos reflect the feelings in the text, such as Sam feeling upset, Sam staying calm, his brother feeling safe, his mother and brother feeling proud of Sam, and lastly, of Sam feeling proud of himself for staying calm. This is a description of the story and the images.
A particularly important aspect of this book is a statement of Sam being proud and taking control over his emotions, making him the hero of the situation. The text on each page is supported by real images of Sam, his brother, and his mother. When Sam becomes stressed he tends to hyperventilate, so some of the earlier books have a cue for Sam to try to control this. Each story had the following sequence embedded into it ‘Stop, take a deep breath, think of something nice, stay calm’. His mother says that this has helped Sam to think about happy times with his brother, and that there is a positive outcome when Sam can stop and calm down. She believes that the photos in the book have had a big impact on Sam, as at times he does not have good memory retention and the books help him to remember so that the next time he is in a similar situation, he knows what to do.

Following the success of the first book, a book to encourage Sam to play with his brother was developed. Sam had some difficulty with sharing his play space and toys. The development of this particular hero book raised some ethical issues for his mother and the IHC team member, as Sam was not aware that the photos his mother was taking of
him were for the hero book. His brother knew they were ‘for a project’ but did not fully understand what it was. Sam’s mother felt it was hard to put them in this situation, but she believed the photos needed to be taken in a meaningful context. However, she had to take into account the risk of placing Sam’s brother in an unsafe situation for a very short time whilst they were taken. The images in this book are of Sam and his brother playing side by side, and at times sharing some Lego with each other. It follows the same sequence as the other books, and the text is centred on Sam and his brother playing together, with Sam feeling proud because he was able to take control of his feelings in this situation; he is keeping both himself, and his brother safe.

Sam’s mother said that she could see that Sam could not understand certain aspects of play. For example, if someone came into the hut to join in his play and he wasn’t finished what he was doing, he thought it was all ruined. However, she said you could explain to Sam that the play could still carry on, that they could both be safe, that Sam could still have his toys and his play would still remain his. The Hero Story books helped Sam to understand this. Sam’s mother found herself looking for other situations where the Hero Story books could be used, but she was always mindful of the importance of not exploiting personal privacy issues when creating them.

DEVELOPING THE HERO STORIES BOOKS FURTHER

As further books were developed, Sam began to express his own feelings and ideas in them. Sam’s mother has described the process of creating a book with Sam to try and help him to understand that other children had special things that were just like his. At the time, Sam was having difficulty when he saw children at school with toys the same as his ones at home, and would often end up in conflict with another child, believing the toy was his. At times he would go into other children’s school bags and take their toys out and bring them home. Sam’s mother wrote the captions ‘I’m Harry’ and ‘Hello my name is Fred’ for the story, and she was going to use thought bubbles expressing feelings in them. When she and Sam read the book that night using just the photos and the introductions, it created a lot of discussion between them.

“And he would come up with his own ideas; ‘oh did you know that’s Fred’s special toy and he probably feels sad. I’d feel sad if I lost mine’. So he could actually put his thoughts and feelings into it.” (Parent)

She says the impact of this book was huge:

“He doesn’t take other peoples things any more and he has an understanding of other people’s belongings, and that was only after one reading but we still looked at the pictures sometimes. He loved the pictures and was probably just as happy looking at the pictures; he could see how proud these people were of their toys and how happy they were that they have their own toys.” (Parent)

THE HERO STORIES PROCESS

Sam’s Hero Stories books were not used when he was stressed or in a crisis situation. They were kept in the book box in the lounge, along with the family’s other reading books and read at different times during the evenings or weekends. The stories were not read in any strict order or sequence and the aim was that they would become a part of the daily household routines.

“They weren’t a routine, like at 5 o’clock we are going to read the, or before dinner, they were just going to be around and were picked up if there was spare time, we would just slot them in.” (Parent)

Some times Sam’s mother read the stories just to Sam, and at times she read them when Sam and his brother were together.

The notion of progress has emerged as the books have become more complex and as Sam has had more input into their development. His mother says that progress can be measured by the positive changes in Sam’s behaviour and his ability to transfer a concept from a book into another situation. She feels Sam has grown in confidence and has increased his literacy and problem-solving skills since the books were first implemented. Sam was able to use the scanner and computer at school, and has become very skilled at developing his own stories. He has taken control of his own learning. Sam has been able to develop self-regulation skills, and apply them in different situations with the help of his Hero Stories books. The progress over time with Hero Stories has included Sam becoming much more involved
in the development of the books, implementing them into the school, involving the rest of Sam’s class, and the teaching staff using them as a form of assessment and linking them to curriculum work at school. Some of the outcomes for Sam from the use of the Hero Stories books include a decrease in his challenging behaviour over a range of areas and developing the ability to be able to come up with his own solutions for some stressful situations. Sam is able to think about and discuss stories in context, outside the reading of the story and apply this to real situations.

“They help him to visually find ways of coping with situations in a calm time so that when a stressful situation arises he can visually reinforce how to cope with the problem.” (Parent)

Sam’s mother maintains that Sam’s input into the development of the Hero Stories books has been critical to their success as he has a sense of ownership of the content. She believes that it is very important the books must be for fun, as well as formal learning.

CONCLUSION

Sam’s Hero Stories books began through a partnership between Sam’s mum and the IHC Behavioural Support team to help Sam learn some coping strategies. As the books evolved, Sam had an increasingly active role in shaping them, taking ownership of their construction. Sam’s books were gradually implemented into his school and his teachers were able to integrate them into his class work. It is evident that Hero Stories have been successful well beyond the original concept. These stories have supported Sam’s inclusion in the school and his local community. They have enhanced Sam’s learning opportunities, and enabled him to take an active role in coping with difficult situations. Hero Stories are focused on the child in the story being in control and learning alternative coping strategies. They are based on the notion that the child becomes the hero by being able to develop self-control in challenging situations, gaining both a sense of achievement and the ability to take control of their behaviour, enabling them to navigate their way through the complexities of the world as a competent and capable learner.

REFERENCES


AUTHORS’ PROFILES

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Linda Jones is Sam and Tyler’s mother. She continues to be involved in supporting Sam to use stories to help him navigate his way through the complexities of his world. Linda is an early childhood teacher and has a strong belief in the power of stories for all children. Linda uses narrative in her teaching practice and believes that strategies such as Hero Stories can work for children in a range of transitions in mainstream settings as well as for supporting children who have special needs.

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He Waka Tino Whakarawea: A Model for Evaluating the Cultural Appropriateness and Effectiveness of Programmes and Services for Māori Learners both with and without Special Needs

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces a waka tino whakarawea model for evaluating programmes and services for Māori learners. It is based on a set of underlying principles identified in the author's PhD study (Bevan-Brown, 2002). Explanations are provided for eight principles: kaupapa Māori; importance, relevance and beneficence; participation; empowerment, tino rangatiratanga and Māori control; accountability; high quality; appropriate personnel and equality and accessibility. Challenges to implementing these principles are outlined and suggestions for overcoming the challenges are shared. A framework containing the principles and 22 associated questions is included, as is a procedure for evaluating, improving or developing programmes and services for Māori learners both with and without special needs. Finally, the waka tino whakarawea metaphor of a well-equipped canoe is explained.

Practice paper

Keywords: Cultural appropriateness, Māori, programme, service evaluation

INTRODUCTION

How can Māori learners with special needs have their needs met in a culturally-appropriate, effective way? This question was at the heart of my PhD study conducted a number of years ago (Bevan-Brown, 2002). To find the answer I conducted a survey of 78 people from 56 special education, disability and Māori organisations, completed 25 follow-up interviews; ran focus group consultation meetings with 50 people from six different kōhanga reo early childhood education services using the medium of Māori language; interviewed 38 parents and whānau (extended family) members and four Māori learners with special needs; carried out a six year case study of one learner; conducted an extensive literature review of relevant Aotearoa/New Zealand and international literature; developed a cultural self-review process and products, and trialled them in 11 educational establishments. The Cultural Self-Review was subsequently published (Bevan-Brown, 2003) and has been used successfully in a number of schools and early childhood education services throughout Aotearoa/New Zealand.

Since publishing the Cultural Self-Review (Bevan-Brown, 2003), I have been asked repeatedly whether the products and process can be used to assess and improve the cultural effectiveness of specific programmes or services. The answer to this query is ‘yes’: adaptations can be made for this use and, in fact this has been done (see, for example, McGee & Lawrence, 2008). However, if time is limited, the waka tino whakarawea model outlined below may be more useful and fit-for-purpose. This model also sits comfortably with the principles and strategies outlined in the recently released Tataiako package (New Zealand Teachers’ Council, 2011; New Zealand Teachers’ Council & the Ministry of Education, 2011).

THE WAKA TINO WHAKARAWEA MODEL

An analysis of the data gathered in all phases of the study revealed a set of principles underlying culturally-appropriate, effective provision for Māori learners with special needs in particular and Māori learners in general. In the following section, principles and challenges to implementing them are briefly explained and some research-generated suggestions for meeting these challenges are offered. Word constraints limit the number of suggestions able to be included. For more ideas refer Bevan-Brown (2002). The eight principles discussed in this paper are:

- Kaupapa Māori
- Importance, relevance and beneficence
- Participation
- Empowerment, tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) and Māori control
- Accountability
- High quality
- Appropriate personnel
- Equality and accessibility.
Kaupapa Māori

Principle
Programmes and services represent a Māori worldview by incorporating Māori concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes, processes, reo (language), practices, customs, values and beliefs. Ratima, Durie, Allan, Morrison, Gillies, and Waldon (1995) highlight the importance of the kaupapa Māori principle: “There is an added onus on providers of services to Māori, that not only shall clients be equipped to participate in mainstream New Zealand society, but they should have the opportunity to participate in Māori society, to belong to Māori institutions, and importantly, remain Māori. The costs of disability are high; they should not include cultural alienation” (p. 48).

Challenges and suggestions
Despite substantial evidence supporting the inclusion of cultural content (Alton-Lee, 2003; Bevan-Brown, 2002; Rogers-Adkinson, Ochoa & Delgado, 2003), research also reveals that the kaupapa Māori principle is often not evident in practice (Bevan-Brown, 2002; Massey, 2002; Wylie, 2000). Major stumbling blocks to its implementation can include: ignorance or denial of the importance of cultural content; a lack of culturally-relevant assessment measures and resources and; a shortage of people with the professional and cultural expertise required to provide culturally-effective services and to develop supporting resources. To address these barriers, research participants recommended: proactive measures to encourage and enable more Māori to enter teaching and special needs-related professions; a compulsory, substantial cultural component in professionals’ pre-service training; readily accessible, Māori-relevant in-service courses; development of joint hapū (subtribe)/iwi (tribe)/Māori and mainstream/Pākehā programmes and services and; the provision of positive inter-cultural experiences especially those that highlighted Māori role models.

Importance, relevance and beneficence

Principle
Programmes and services focus on matters of importance, concern and benefit to Māori. Provisions are relevant and address needs and aspirations identified by parents, whānau, the Māori community and the learners themselves.

Challenges and suggestions
While the principles of importance, relevance and beneficence cannot be disputed, two areas of potential conflict arise when putting them into practice. The first involves general disagreements about what is considered important, relevant and beneficial. An example from the study was the placement of three students in segregated classes, a situation considered by teachers as advantageous but by parents and whānau as limiting.

The second area of potential conflict relates to the influence of cultural factors on the perception and management of special needs. Concepts such as “disability”, “deviance” and “giftedness” are culturally defined. For example, what is considered “deviant” in one culture may be accepted as “normal” in another. Incompatible cultural concepts, expectations, beliefs, procedures, values, norms and practices can result in disagreements about what is important, relevant and beneficial.

Suggestions for addressing cultural incompatibilities include identifying specific areas where parents’ and professionals’ beliefs are convergent, divergent and in conflict, and then exploring ways convergent areas can be expanded, divergent areas respected, and areas of conflict dealt with. A second approach involves identifying and validating the differences, frames of reference and shared goals of all concerned, negotiating practices and beliefs and exploring ways to “fuse horizons” to achieve mutually agreeable solutions (Danseco, 1997). Strategies that facilitate positive home-school relationships can also contribute to identifying matters of importance, concern and benefit to Māori learners, their parents and whānau.

Participation

Principle
This principle involves the consultative, collaborative participation of parents, whānau, the Māori community and the learners themselves in all stages of the programme or service. It is acknowledged, however, that the degree of participation possible will vary according to the availability, preference, age and ability of those involved and the nature and circumstance of the provision. Consequently, participation will be to the extent Māori choose and feel comfortable with.

The principle of participation has a dual focus. It not only consists of Māori involvement in the programmes and services offered but also includes professional involvement in the Māori community. By interacting with learners, parents and whānau outside of the school/centre context and by becoming involved in the activities of the Māori community, professionals can gain an understanding and appreciation of Māori perspectives and increase their knowledge of
factors that influence the lives of the learners and families with whom they work.

**Challenges and suggestions**

A range of circumstances can work against successful participation. Principal amongst these are negative experiences, unwelcoming attitudes and a lack of time, opportunity, confidence and commitment on the part of either service receivers or service providers. Strategies participants suggested to encourage and facilitate participation include: providing transport and child-minding to enable parents to access services and attend meetings; giving parents a choice of time and meeting venue and allowing them to invite support people; using jargon-free language and user-friendly means to communicate with parents and whānau; instigating a home-school notebook system; establishing a welcoming open door policy and; providing home-based services, family education sessions and social functions where food is provided and children’s progress celebrated.

**Empowerment, tino rangatiratanga and Māori control**

**Principle**

Programmes and services can result in the empowerment of Māori at multiple levels. They provide learners, parents and whānau with the skills, knowledge, means, opportunity and authority to act for themselves and to make their own decisions. Inherent in this is the provision of real choices about which decisions can be made. The Māori community is also empowered in their involvement either as participants in programmes and services; as partners in service provision; or enabled to offer their own hāpu/iwi-based or pan-Māori programmes and services. They contribute to decision-making that affects Māori at organisational, regional and national levels and have the power and resources needed to determine their own future.

**Challenges and suggestions**

Findings of the study revealed that, generally, educational establishments and organisations decided how, where, when and to what extent parents and whānau could be involved or “used.” Parental and whānau choice was often limited to deciding whether or not to participate. Barriers to empowerment, tino rangatiratanga and Māori control that were identified included: negative and prejudicial attitudes; personal insecurities and fear of “losing control”; organisational, discipline and personal power plays; funding restrictions; lack of awareness of practices that reflect unequal power relationships; lack of knowledge about power sharing techniques; shortage of people with the expertise necessary to provide hāpu/iwi or pan-Māori services and reluctance to take on the responsibilities concomitant with personal empowerment or Māori control.

Empowerment requires those who presently hold power to provide space for Māori to participate, opportunities to make their own decisions and resources to implement these decisions. It involves shared understandings, mutual respect and the valuing of diversity. Previously mentioned strategies to overcome detrimental attitudes and increase the number of people with both cultural and professional expertise will contribute to overcoming barriers to empowerment. However, by themselves such measures are not enough to achieve significant empowerment, tino rangatiratanga and Māori control. Widespread, far-reaching changes at a societal level are needed to address power imbalance and the relationship of dominance and subordination that has resulted from colonisation (Bishop & Glynn, 1999). Raising awareness of the extent to which political, judicial, economic, educational, health and social institutions are presently controlled by and reflect white, middle-class, non-disabled values and practices is an immense task. Multicultural education provides a good starting point by involving all students in critically examining issues relating to the cause, impact and maintenance of unequal power relationships, prejudice, racism, social injustice, inequality and poverty (Banks & McGee-Banks, 2010). This critical reflection can then be followed by student, school and community involvement in addressing the issues identified.

**Accountability**

**Principle**

Professionals are accountable to learners, parents, whānau and Māori community for the cultural and general effectiveness of the programmes and services they provide.

**Challenges and suggestions**

Despite the importance of accountability, some parents and whānau in the study expressed concern that teachers, principals and special educators did not appear to be answerable for their actions. Stories were told of queries and complaints being ignored or “fobbed off”. A classic example is where a mother’s concern about her son’s reading progress was dismissed with the comment that she had nothing to worry about because her son “was actually above average for a Māori child” (Bevan-Brown, 2002, p.268). Research participants advocated for the introduction of transparent, ongoing accountability checks and measures which, ideally, would involve stakeholders’ input into
their design, development, implementation and monitoring. Such measures should include clearly defined strategies for improvement, consequences, and be regularly reviewed. The Cultural Self-Review (Bevan-Brown, 2003) was perceived as a useful accountability tool especially when it was conducted by the Māori community and school/centre in partnership. It was also recommended as an accountability tool which the Education Review Office (ERO) could use.

High quality

Principle

Programmes and services ought to be of high quality. As well as being culturally-appropriate, they should be evidence-based; include accurate and ongoing assessment; be well planned and coordinated; employ effective teaching strategies; be pitched at the correct ability level; utilise quality equipment and resources; be positively focused; build on students’ strengths; provide for all areas of development; involve efficient administration and co-ordination of services. In fact, incorporate all the components that have been identified as ‘best practice’ in the field.

An important message consistently given by participants in the study was that there was no point in programmes and services being culturally-appropriate if they did not work! Parents and whānau in particular were concerned about the quality of the special education their children received. They listed a multitude of process, content and organisational requirements for effective programmes and services, including: appropriate, purposeful, timely assessment; ongoing programme evaluation; comprehensive, accurately focused, regular and sufficient interventions and generous funding and resourcing. Evidence-based practices recommended for Pākehā learners with special needs were considered equally important for Māori learners. However, in addition to this, provisions for Māori learners must also be culturally-appropriate.

Challenges and suggestions

The challenges to providing high quality programmes and services are mainly related to the shortage of suitably qualified, competent professionals, the dearth of relevant resources and to a general lack of funding. The majority of recommendations, for increasing teacher competence, were directed at the development of cultural expertise, suggestions for which have been mentioned previously. Participants also provided many suggestions for increasing teacher competence in general, for improving the quality of services and for increasing funding. These included calls to: increase collaboration and sharing of knowledge amongst professionals; decrease “red tape” so more money is spent on services rather than administration; reduce class size; establish advisory groups of parents and professionals with special education expertise and experience; get best teacher-pupil match by strategic class placement; pool Special Education Grant (SEG) money to generate sufficient funding for a shared full time teacher or teacher-aide and to buy resources and equipment that could be shared and tap into additional funding sources, such as local businesses and Māori Trust Boards.

Appropriate personnel

Principle

Service providers have the personal, professional and cultural expertise required. They are valuing and supportive of Māori culture and the learners, parents and whānau with whom they work.

Research participants were specific about the skills they believed professionals should possess: Professionals should be well-trained, confident and competent in their particular profession. Additionally, they should possess the skills needed to interact effectively and sensitively with a wide range of people; have a commitment to their job; be responsible, and have a positive, caring attitude towards learners with special needs, their parents and whānau. The cultural expertise specified by participants included: an understanding of the linguistic, cultural and spiritual background of Māori; a respect for and knowledge of cultural values, concepts, beliefs and practices and the implications these have for the identification and servicing of learners with special needs; cross-cultural competence; a commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi, and an understanding of the negative effects of colonisation. Those working with learners in Māori-medium situations should have a knowledge of total immersion and bilingual systems and philosophies and an understanding of the educational and developmental implications of bilingualism.

Challenges and suggestions

Employing appropriate personnel is not an easy task. Previously reported challenges such as the shortage of people having both cultural and professional expertise and the lack of funding to hire them present major barriers. Two additional challenges identified in the organisation survey were the lack of culturally-appropriate, relevant training for staff in both mainstream and Māori services and high stress levels leading to “burnout” amongst Māori workers in the special needs area.
High quality, compulsory, bicultural pre-service training and readily available Māori-focused in-service education should improve cultural and professional competence. A further suggestion was the introduction of guaranteed Māori placements in courses where there is an acute shortage of Māori workers. Other strategies used by organisations in the study include: proactive recruitment; financial assistance and training incentives to attract Māori workers; and professional development, support and mentoring to increase the cultural and professional expertise of the existing workforce.

**Equality and accessibility**

*Principle*

Programmes and services should be readily accessible to Māori learners, their parents and whānau. They have the same rights and privileges as other learners and experience equitable access, use and outcomes.

Article Three of the Treaty of Waitangi promises Māori the “rights and privileges of British subjects”. This constitutes a guarantee of legal equality between Māori and other New Zealanders. The Government acknowledges that implicit in legal equality is the assurance of actual enjoyment of social benefits. “Where serious and persistent imbalances exist between groups, in their actual enjoyment of social benefits such as health, education and housing, the Government will consider particular measures to assist in redressing the balance” (Department of Justice, 1989, p. 13).

The implication of this Treaty provision is that professionals may need to take proactive measures to ensure their Māori students are able to take full advantage of the programmes and services they offer. A point that was emphasised by participants within the study was that culturally-appropriate, effective services are only of benefit if they can be accessed by Māori learners with special needs, their parents and whānau. Affordable cost, convenient time and location, friendly personnel, barrier-free safe environments, and readily available and understandable advertising information are all important accessibility factors that must consequently be taken into consideration.

*Challenges and suggestions*

An analysis of research data revealed that a wide range of factors were contributing to the inequities identified. Principal amongst these were: the shortage of culturally-appropriate services, programmes and resources and of special educational professionals with te reo Māori; attitudes and practices detrimental to Māori; the rural location of many Māori families; the cost involved in accessing many services, especially associated medical provisions; cultural behaviours such as whakamā (embarrassment), and the shortage of information about special education and medical services and entitlements. Strategies employed to overcome these challenges include: fundraising, time payment and family concessions used to defray education costs; Resource Teachers: Learning and Behaviour (RTLB) making home visits; vision and hearing assessors conducting tests at kōhanga reo; asthma information provided at mall stalls, sports meetings and facilities, Māori health days and culture competitions; resources to assist with reading and te reo made available for home use, and increased advertising of services and entitlements especially at venues and in publications popular with Māori.

**USING THE WAKA TINO WHAKARAWEA MODEL**

Appendix A contains the principles of the waka tino whakarawea model with associated questions. These questions provide guidance for evaluating, improving or developing programmes and services for Māori learners both with and without special needs. While useful for initial reflection, people are encouraged to develop further questions that reflect the associated principle and facilitate a more fine-grained evaluation. It is also recommended that people record their responses to the guiding questions and develop a plan of action to build on strengths and address any weaknesses identified.

The waka tino whakarawea model is intended to be used flexibly. For example, IHC could use the principles and guiding questions to examine all their existing services for Māori learners with special needs; to focus on their provisions in a particular geographic area, or to guide the development of a new programme for Māori residents in community homes or respite care facilities.

**WHY A WAKA TINO WHAKARAWEA?**

In conclusion, the choice of a waka tino whakarawea should be explained. Bishop and Glynn (1999) maintain that teachers develop principles and practices that reflect the imagery and metaphors they hold. The metaphor of waka tino whakarawea as a well-equipped canoe is illustrated in Figure 1. In the past, special education in Aotearoa/New Zealand has been dominated by the medical model. Similarly, Māori education has been governed by a deficit
mentality. Thankfully, these paradigms are changing. To support this change and facilitate progress for Māori learners both with and without special needs, programmes and services are likened to a waka tino whakarawea - a well-equipped canoe on which they travel at one stage of their life’s journey. The kaunoti (hull) represents the requirements of importance, relevance and beneficence. The hoe (paddles) represent high-quality, integrated provisions and appropriate, accountable personnel. These are the components that enable the waka to travel smoothly and surely. If any component is missing, the waka will travel in circles, making only limited progress. If all components are missing, the waka may not progress at all or, being at the mercy of the current, may founder on the rocks. Traditionally, even small waka had rā (sails) (Best, 1976). These assisted the rowers and hastened progress. In this analogy the participation of parents, whānau and the Māori community provide the rā. The more empowered they are, the greater the rate of progress made. The kaupapa Māori requirement can be likened to the harakeke (flax) lashings that bind the various parts of the waka together. As these lashings provide strength and cohesiveness to the waka, Māori input achieves the same task for programmes and services offered to Māori learners. The tatā (bailer) represents equality. If water enters, the bailer is used to enable the waka to remain balanced and afloat. Finally, the path to the waka represents accessibility. If this is blocked, the Māori learner will be forced to make the journey on foot. Progress by this means will be much slower and more laborious. Professionals are challenged to ensure that their programmes and services will provide Māori learners with a fleet, successful and enjoyable ride!

Figure 1. He waka tino whakarawea: A well-equipped canoe.
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### Principle Guiding Questions

**Kaupapa Māori**
Programmes and services represent a Māori worldview by incorporating Māori concepts, knowledge, skills, attitudes, processes, reo, practices, customs, values and beliefs.

1. What Māori content is present?
2. What Māori values and processes are evident?
3. What opportunities are there for staff to increase their cultural competence?

**Importance, Relevance and Beneficence**
Programmes and services focus on matters of importance, concern and benefit to Māori. Provisions are relevant and address needs and aspirations identified by parents, whānau, the Māori community and the learners themselves.

4. How are matters of importance, concern and benefit to Māori identified and provided for?
5. How are cultural incompatibilities identified and addressed?
6. Are conflict resolution procedures fair, transparent, widely advertised and culturally-appropriate?

**Participation**
Learners, their parents, whānau, and the Māori community are welcome and involved in programmes and services. Similarly, professionals are welcome and involved in the lives of their students and the Māori community.

7. Is there Māori involvement in all stages of the programme or service and at all levels?
8. How are barriers to Māori participation identified and addressed?
9. How are professionals involved in the lives of learners and the Māori community?

**Empowerment, Tino Rangitiratanga and Māori Control**
Programmes and services result in the empowerment of Māori at multiple levels. They provide learners, parents, whānau, and the Māori community with the skills, knowledge, means, opportunity and authority to act for themselves and to make their own decisions.

10. In what ways and at what levels are Māori involved in decisions that relate to them?
11. How are Māori learners, parents, whānau and community members enskilled and given authority to act for themselves?
12. Are issues of power imbalance, prejudice, racism, social injustice, inequality and poverty identified, discussed and addressed?

**Accountability**
Professionals are accountable to learners, parents, whānau and the Māori community for the cultural and general effectiveness of the programmes and services they provide.

13. How are professionals accountable for the cultural and general effectiveness of their programmes and services?
14. What input do Māori have in accountability procedures and measures?

**High Quality**
Programmes and services are of a high quality. As well as being culturally-appropriate, they incorporate components identified as “best practice” in the field.

15. What evidence base is there to the programmes and services offered?
16. How are the quality and effectiveness of programmes and services evaluated?
17. Are the resources and equipment used of a high quality?

**Appropriate Personnel**
Service providers have the personal, professional and cultural expertise required. They are valuing and supportive of Māori culture and the learners, parents and whānau with whom they work.

18. What measures are used to attract staff with appropriate personal, professional and cultural expertise and supportive, valuing attitudes?
19. How is the appropriateness of staff gauged and what strategies are used to address any weaknesses identified?

**Equality and Accessibility**
Programmes and services are readily accessible to Māori learners, their parents and whānau. They have the same rights and privileges as other learners and experience equitable access, use and outcomes.

20. How are equity of access, use and outcomes measured?
21. If inequalities are identified, what strategies are used to address them?
22. Is Māori content accorded equal value and status as other curriculum content and is it equally accessible?
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How Aligned Are We? Assessment Procedures and Practices Between Early Childhood and Early Intervention

Toia Caulcutt and Vanessa Paki
University of Waikato

ABSTRACT

Early intervention and early childhood share a unique space in our early years education in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The assessment practices of the two are distinctively different and specific to each discipline. As assessment is a powerful agent for change and responsiveness to learners this article will unpack the reasoning behind these differences and consider the possibility of addressing a possible alignment through the early childhood curriculum Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996).

INTRODUCTION

Planning for learning opportunities for children is a fundamental principle unique to all educational domains. The pursuit of excellence has led us to the path of assessment; of the child, the service, educational delivery and most recently ourselves as practitioners to ensure we meet the needs of all learners. Within early childhood education (ECE), the national curriculum Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996) supports a proactive approach with teaching supported by ongoing assessment, planning and reflection, in which the educator is a central key to the success of the child. Te Whāriki is also vital in the assessment practices of early intervention (EI) services across Aotearoa/New Zealand. However, with EI linked firmly to accountability measures and then to resource allocation (Ministry of Education, 2001), the assessment process encompasses a balance between individual need, allocation of resources and professional assistance. This variance in assessment practice and procedures between ECE and EI has formed the basis for conflicting perspectives. In particular, how do we determine what is best for children with special needs in early childhood services? In this paper we will examine the assessment practices of both ECE and EI. We will explore assessment approaches, highlight similarities and differences, and finally look into possibilities for a realignment of assessment for both disciplines.

ASSESSMENT PURPOSES AND PROCEDURES

Traditional assessment processes in ECE outside Aotearoa/New Zealand have been significantly influenced by developmentally appropriate practices (DAP), which is an organised system of measuring children’s development from birth onwards (Aldwinckle, 2001; Hestenes & Carroll, 2000; Jambunathan & Counsellor, 2001; Linder, 1993; Mahoney & Wheelen, 1999). This system clearly defines a view of typical child development, which has stimulated international debate because of its monocultural, sequential perspective, and its sole focus on levels of developmental attainment (Aldwinckle, 2001). Aldwinckle (2001) also criticised DAP by questioning the ethnocentricity in the assessments’ view of what is typical child development.

Early childhood pedagogy in Aotearoa/New Zealand is unique in design, supported by a holistic bicultural curriculum, and using a multifaceted approach to assessment (Claxton & Carr, 2004). Te Whāriki (Ministry of Education, 1996) is founded upon four unique principles: kotahitanga – holistic development; whakamana – empowerment; whānau tangata – family and community, and ngā hononga – relationships. These principles are in turn supported by five core curriculum strands, wellbeing, belonging, contribution, communication and exploration (Ministry of Education, 1996). In Aotearoa/New Zealand, Te Whāriki supports a collaborative perspective to learning, based on the work of Bronfenbrenner (1979). Learning is viewed as a process of interactions between the learner and their immediate environments, including adults, peers, communities of learning and general societal beliefs and values which influence the learner (Claihorne & Drewery, 2010). This view is equally supported in a bicultural context by theorists such as Pere (1991) and Durie (1993) where, from a Māori perspective, learning is also in conjunction with complex, yet inclusive, ideologies. These ideologies include unique, non-tangible aspects such as wairua – a spiritual dimension - and validate its place in assessment and learning processes not only for Māori children, but all learners (Ministry of Education, 1996). It is the inclusion of the abstract that makes the national ECE curriculum, Te Whāriki, unique.
Te Whāriki is also quite pivotal in its recognition that learning does not necessarily follow a pre-organised chronological pattern (Ministry of Education, 1996). Te Whāriki recognises that learning, although on a continuum, is not necessarily predictable and also acknowledges that learning is dependent upon the environment and what we as adults contribute to it. A significant principle is nga hononga (relationships), through which “children learn through responsive and reciprocal relationships with people places and things” (Ministry of Education, 1996, p. 43). From this lens we were able to acknowledge that children require adult assistance to access their learning and follow their own interests (Hatherly & Sands, 2002). Early childhood pedagogy in Aotearoa/New Zealand has progressed since Te Whāriki was first published in 1996. We have moved from traditional planning to a model of noticing, recognising and responding, then documenting (Claxton & Carr, 2004; Carr, May & Podmore, 1998). A key shift here is less pre-planned activity, and instead opportunities for children to self-direct their own interests, and for practitioners to provide co-constructed environments which support these interests (Hatherly & Sands, 2002).

To support this new perspective, Carr (1998; 2001) developed learning stories in a project with teachers in five early childhood services. This is an assessment tool used in early childhood education services and in which the core curriculum strands are integrated into the assessment, supported by key learning dispositions that may be pivotal to a child’s learning. The curriculum principles are also guiding principles for the assessment process used by early childhood teachers (Ministry of Education, 1996). The learning stories approach to assessment is also referred to by Dunn (2004) as a formative assessment practice, as opposed to summative assessment. Dunn (2004) elaborates further, stating that formative assessment provides the learner with an ongoing journey, learning opportunities available are recognised, and additional supports are recommended. Hatherly and Sands (2002) also argue that following children’s interests, using assessment, provides the learner with self-fulfilment and confidence, some core outcomes that are often neglected in traditional assessments. Most importantly here is that episodes of learning can be revisited in follow-up assessments, hence learning is on a continuum rather than assessing learning as a slice of time in a child’s life. Another key shift for early childhood teachers has been the inclusion of various perspectives in assessment (Carr, May, & Podmore, 1998). By pulling together the various lenses on assessment for learning we can evaluate the learning opportunities as a community, rather than as an individual with any single narrow perspective. With this viewpoint in mind, early childhood teachers are able to use learning stories as a method of building partnerships with parents (Hatherly & Sands, 2002), and include and validate the learners’ perspective too.

Essential to the practice of learning stories as a form of assessment is that early childhood teachers view children’s assessments as a complex, yet collaborative process where the teachers are enablers. Learning stories place the responsibility for children’s learning on the environment and opportunities provided by educators. This form of assessment also places emphasis on what the learner is capable of, and what they may be capable of with additional support provided by the educator (Carr et al., 1998). This proactive, responsive form of assessment includes reflection on “where to next”.

EARLY INTERVENTION AND ASSESSMENT

Early intervention services

Early intervention, as a discipline, has carved a subtle yet distinctive path from that of early childhood teachers. Intervention teachers focus primarily on an individual child’s global development highlighting areas of need throughout their time with the service (Ministry of Education, 2004). In Aotearoa/New Zealand there is a diverse range of early intervention services, ranging from government funded and operated, to private, trust, or organisationally owned. Regardless of the management, services here in Aotearoa/New Zealand are funded by similar sources - most through government funding, from education and health sectors. Some organisations also continue to fundraise privately to support their service. Some services offer unique forms of service delivery, including health orientation, total language immersion, or Māori for Māori focused (Ministry of Education, 2004). Philosophical underpinnings are unique to each organisation and their reasons for being founded.

Developmentally appropriate practices

Originally, early intervention as a discipline focused solely on the teaching of skills to children who were intellectually disabled (Fraser, Moltzen & Ryba, 2005). This form of intervention was deeply based in a medical discourse, viewing children as in need of “fixing” (Neilson, 2005). This medical discourse highlights deficits and initially formed the basis of a focus core for early intervention practice (Dunn, 2004). Although there have been significant shifts in the field of disability, of particular interest is the shift from a medical discourse to a rights discourse (Neilson, 2005),
the question remains - how much has this shift in inclusive thinking evolved into the assessment practices and procedures of early intervention teachers?

Early intervention teachers have faced similar paths to those in the early childhood sector regarding assessment. Like early childhood practitioners, early intervention teachers have also been strongly influenced by the founding assessment approach of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) (Huffman & Speer, 2000). Montessori’s original work in the early 1900s (Roopnarine & Johnson, 1993) supported the medical discourse in her work with young children with disabilities where the focus was on specific skill acquisition. Dunn (2004) referred to this as the “test and teach” method, from which came the development of standardised criterion-based assessment.

Standardised criterion-based assessments have been used as an assessment approach across all early intervention providers. These forms of assessment are characterised by their focus on specific skills, which have been paralleled with a chronological measurement (Anderson, 2004; Dunn, 2004; Macy, Bricker, & Squires, 2005; Mahoney & Wheeden, 1999). These forms of assessment have been useful to early intervention teachers as they clearly define the child’s needs, which then correspond with the design of service delivery and required resources (Bricker, 1995; Macy et al., 2005). Various standardised criterion-based assessments have been developed, some being more specific to chronological and developmental stages, for example the tool Developmental Programming for Infants and Young Children (Schafer & Moersch, 1981). Other resources focus more specifically on targeted areas, for example, Transdisciplinary Play-based Intervention: Guidelines for Developing a Meaningful Curriculum for Young Children (Linder, 1993), which concentrates on children’s overall sub-skill development. However, traditional practice in early intervention is the use of several standardised assessments so the early intervention teachers can cross-reference and gain a deeper understanding of the child being assessed (Bricker, 1995; Ministry of Education, 2004).

Funding allocation processes

A critical factor to consider is the allocation of government resources based on individual level of need, which is where a standardised criterion assessment has its advantages for early intervention teachers. Macy et al., (2005) discuss the importance of remaining impartial during assessments, which validates the child’s eligibility to access resources. The Ministry of Education (2004) also supports this view with policies and criteria to support early intervention services. The Ministry of Education has several policies that determine funding allocation to early intervention services, which in turn directly impact the assessment practices and procedures of early intervention teachers in Aotearoa/New Zealand. The Statement of Intent (Ministry of Education, 2007) endorses a commitment to early intervention. Assessment must have a clear process, with key outcomes attached. These processes include how the assessments will be used to determine eligibility, and the importance of using formal assessment tools, or standardised criterion-based assessments (Ministry of Education, 2001). The assessment phase should incorporate a range of material gathered, including interviews with staff at the early childhood education service, parental input, paraprofessional reports and observations. However, the core material used to determine resource allocation is the standardised assessment (Bricker, 1995; Macy et al., 2005; Ministry of Education, 2001).

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES

A key similarity between the two disciplines, EI and ECE, is that both gather assessment information in order to learn more about the child. Both early childhood and early intervention acknowledge the importance of noticing learning as it occurs, and recognising its significance (Dunn, 2004). Both disciplines also recognise the significance of responding to that interest or learning, however differences can often determine how the response is carried out.

During the assessment phase, early intervention teachers are attempting to gather all perspectives, however their fundamental objective is to assess the child’s needs in terms of their organisation’s resource criteria (Bricker, 1995; Linder, 1997) because this determines their ongoing support. This form of assessment tends to focus on a slice of time, when the child is formally assessed and measured against a formal assessment tool. The measurement documents what the children are capable or not capable of at this time and in these circumstances (Dunn, 2004). Hence, their response is skill-acquisition based, not interest-based. Bagnato (2005) refers to this as being “field-validated”.

Early childhood teachers tend to focus on what children are currently interested in (Carr, 2001; Carr et al., 1998; Hatherly & Sands, 2002) and recognise that learning dispositions play a significant part in their long-term learning. The use of learning stories assessment has encouraged a proactive discourse and highlights what the child is capable of, given a facilitating environment.
Weaving educational threads. Weaving educational practice.
the unique setting and cultural capital of each learner. It also situates the child within a rich, wide environment and context that is reciprocal and unique as the learners themselves. By viewing children in this way we will recognise the strengths of their context and richness of their families which is crucial to both early intervention and early childhood.

We would recommend further exploration of these ideas and in particular a closer look into the outcomes and possibilities for assessment procedures in early intervention for Māori learners.

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Successful Tongan Students in New Zealand Secondary Schools: Default or Design?

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ABSTRACT

This article outlines the use of Gagne’s (2008) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent (DMGT) as applied to Tongan secondary school students in New Zealand. Two case studies of Tongan young women are shared with a particular emphasis on the influence of catalysts, the chance factor, and developmental processes upon the development of their gifts to talents. The article explains the Tongan way, a conceptual map for developing better understandings of Tongan gifted and talented students in New Zealand. The article concludes that the Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent is a framework teachers can use to explore giftedness with Pasifika families, communities, and students to assist in better understanding their special abilities, qualities, and needs.

Research paper

Keywords: Gagne, gifted and talented, Tongan

SUCCESSFUL TONGAN STUDENTS IN NEW ZEALAND SECONDARY SCHOOLS: DEFAULT OR DESIGN?

Tongans have migrated mostly to New Zealand, Australia and the United States, with Tongan populations tending to be concentrated in particular cities and towns within these countries. A complex network of connections exists between Tongans in these places and in Tonga, including the practice of sending remittances and the extensive use of online communication. Few Tongans ever completely lose their connections – emotional, familial, economic, religious, and otherwise – to their homeland; they remain between two shores. Often the primary motivation for migration is to help the family. The idea of ‘family’ encompasses a complex set of rights and obligations of Tongan kinship as well as the deep emotional connections between kin (Morton-Lee, 2003).

The largest group of Tongans living overseas is in New Zealand where they constitute 18% of the Pasifika population (Statistics, NZ, 2007). According to the 2001 census, 80% of the 40,716 Tongans in New Zealand (Statistics, NZ, 2007) live in Auckland, the biggest Polynesian city in the world. Just over half of Tongan people in New Zealand are New Zealand born and the youthful population is rapidly increasing. Immigration to New Zealand is driven by educational and economic aspirations and, although some return to Tonga, most have established families in New Zealand, adapting their traditions of church life, kinship bonds and child rearing to the new environment (Tau’akipulu, 2000). A third of Tongan families in New Zealand include the nuclear family, a grandparent and members of the kāinga (extended family). Ninety-two percent of Tongans in New Zealand are affiliated with a religious group and are generally intensively involved in the church which is the mainstay of Tongan community life.

Cultural Concepts

Tongan students in New Zealand are very likely to reflect the beliefs of their parents and kāinga (extended family). These may include definite views about social structure, learning and teaching, as well as social values. Tongans have particular traditional views about the hierarchical structure of society which influence all activities (Figure 1). Rank is fixed at birth and the most fundamental distinction is between ‘eiki (chief/noble) and tu’a (commoner). Tu’i (paramount chief, royalty) and matāpule (chief’s ceremonial attendants) are actually separate categories but are usually encompassed within the general category hou’eiki (chiefly people). Over time, especially since the emergence of an educated middle class of commoners and church dignitaries, the power accorded to each rank has altered significantly. However, there is still a clear distinction between hou’eiki and tu’a that affects people’s everyday lives (Morton, 1996).
Cutting across the ranking system is social differentiation based on status. In any given context, a person’s status is relative to that of whomever else is present. It is primarily determined by seniority (chronological or genealogical), gender and kinship relations. Another, more flexibly determined factor, is reputation which can be enhanced by education, wealth, generosity, and involvement in church activities.

A poto person (one who is clever, wise, capable, able and socially-competent) must be aware of the complexities of rank and status, including the current tensions arising from contact with other cultures. The following definition would be considered within that social context. Morton explains that becoming poto entails learning the skills necessary for daily life and acquiring a formal education, but most essentially it entails developing appropriateanga(habit; custom; nature; quality; character; behaviour; conduct). One’sanga should be totonu(right, proper),fe‘unga(befitting, suitable) andlelei(good). Becoming poto also involves being able to match behaviour to context – knowing what to do, being able to do it, knowing when to do it and doing it well. Being poto means both learning the rules and learning how to manipulate them to one’s advantage. Like the English term ‘clever’, the meaning of poto can shade into ‘cunning’, ‘crafty’ or ‘astute’. Because protecting and enhancing the reputation of self and family, and avoidingfakamā(shame), are central motives for proper behaviour in Tonga, the need for children to develop proper and become poto tends to be explained in terms of the importance of other people’s opinions and expectations.

To be poto is a highly valued, ideal end point of socialisation and, like Gagne’s (2002) talent development process, perceived as a process of achievement and success, a movement fromvale(foolish, silly, ignorant, immature, unskilled, incapable, incompetent), which is often considered the natural state of children, although individuals of any age can be calledvaleor angavalewhen they have behaved foolishly or been socially inept. Thus, giftedness in Tonga includes the following:

- possession of knowledge that is worthwhile to society and therefore acknowledged by others
- ability to practise and pass that knowledge on to others
- social status within a group
- spiritual/mystical elements which give power/influence.

This concept of giftedness encompasses many aspects of‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga (the Tongan way) and may or may not include being‘atamai-vave (quick minded, quick thinking).

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1 The term fakapotopoto is used for people who are wise in respecting the social nuances in particular situations.
The Tongan Way

The world of the Tongan child in New Zealand, or elsewhere, is deeply affected by ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga. In order for educators to positively enable talent development of Tongan students, some understanding of this epistemological viewpoint is needed. In this section, we explain the Tongan Way is exemplified by Seini and Julia (pseudonyms), students who were the subjects of research into gifted and talented Tongan students in New Zealand (Frengley-Vaipuna, 2007). At the time of the research, both young women were at faith-based schools in Year 13, prefects, accomplished orators and leaders of various sporting, cultural and musical school groups. Seini was born in New Zealand and had parents who were both educated to tertiary level. Julia had come to New Zealand when she was four and her parents worked in the service industry.

Figure 2 provides a conceptual map which can be used to help educators understand gifted and talented Tongan students living in New Zealand. At the outer edge lies the environmental context, and if this outer layer changes, other layers will change in response to the altered life experiences. Each person’s sense of the Tongan way will be unique and will alter during their lifetime. Traditions or customs are generated empirically, being those ways of doing things, beliefs held etc. which we find to work in our particular geographic or social environment. Customs are generally environment-specific. Cultural traditions can cease to work in new or changed environments (Helu, 1999a).

‘Ulungaanga faka-Tonga/to’onga faka-Tonga or ‘the Tongan way’ is a complex socialisation process. Futa Helu (1999b; 1999c), long time director of Atenisi University, defines cultural traditions as those forms of behaviour such as activities, beliefs, values and ideals, that change so slowly they give the impression of not changing at all and are so because they are promoted throughout society. He maintains that the complete set of such forms of behaviour for a given social group or society is the culture of that group. Morton-Lee (2003) reports that many Tongans assert that to be ‘really’ Tongan, a person must have not only Tongan ancestors, but also a knowledge of ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga, or the Tongan Way. She explains that this concept encompasses all values, beliefs, and practices that are regarded as elements of Tongan culture and tradition. However, unlike Helu, she believes that such a broad definition is open to interpretation and is constantly under negotiation and reconstruction. She does not regard competence in Tongan language as essential. Furthermore, Morton-Lee (2003) believes that any attempt to list and measure the criteria that define Tongan identity would be futile as each individual has their own definition of that identity shaped by their social/cultural background and life experiences.

For instance, Seini and Julia are both proud to be Tongan yet coming from quite different backgrounds, have quite different exposure to, and understanding of, ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga. However, both girls crave leadership roles and in order to be seen as poto by other Tongans, and therefore have influence in their communities, they need to have some understanding of certain elements that are widely regarded as essentially Tongan, even though some of these elements are contested and subject to transformation (Morton-Lee, 2003). These elements are shown in the inner rings of Figure 2 and explained below.

Feohi refers to ideals of closeness and togetherness (Morton, 1996). This entails the interactions with immediate and extended family and the maintenance of kinship ties which promote an understanding of the hierarchical roles within the kāmaga. This will also involve knowledge of language which brings a deeper understanding of ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga and easy access to Tongan community functions and events. Within families, each member has clearly defined roles and obligations based on tetokoni’aki (the concept of reciprocity) and depending on their birth order, status, education level and access to resources (often aligned with opportunities afforded through migration). For example, giving a prize won at school immediately to the paternal aunt publically at the prizegiving, honours her status in the family. The individual is less important than the family.

Faka’apa’apa or respect is a defining feature of all social relations which involves deference to those of higher status. It can be broadly seen as general good manners or as acknowledging tapu (taboos). An example is the traditional respect children should show their father by not touching his head, using his personal belongings that touch his body (clothes, gloves, shoes etc.), sharing his food or drink or being overly familiar with him. There are many tapu associated with brother/sister relationships (including all cousins, second cousins and relations of the same generation). In Seini’s boarding school these cultural traditions were used to define the relationships between male and female students although she felt the boys at the school were not as respectful as they should be. However, her friend Lopeti explained respect as “the way you act in front of your Tongan sisters and that ‘cos that’s the way I was brought up. I wasn’t allowed to watch TV with my sisters and that kind of...all those other stuff...” (Frengley-Vaipuna, personal communication, 2005). That “stuff” includes not swearing, any kind of sexual references or banter, going into your sisters’ rooms,
girls not wearing shorts or other revealing clothes around their brothers, viewing sexuality (including kissing) in the media. These taboos (tapu) are often broken inadvertently in New Zealand high schools. Some Tongan families in New Zealand have relaxed these taboos. As Julia said of her parents, “they’ve just sort of adapted to both worlds,” (Frengley-Vaipuna, personal communication, 2005) and many Tongan parents have made many such adaptations to the Tongan way.

Talangofua is best described as obedience, listening properly and carrying out orders unquestioningly. Submissiveness as a sign of respect and obedience is a positively valued quality (Morton, 1996) and children’s lives should be mo‘ui takongoongo (a life of waiting for instructions). In this way they are told the right things to do, how and when to do them. Obedience to parents is first and foremost but this extends to all other authority within Tongan social hierarchy, including the church. Such submissiveness can be maintained through harsh physical punishment (Kavapalu, 1993) and is an area of direct conflict with Pāngi (European) child-rearing practice and, sometimes, New Zealand laws.

Young New Zealand-born Tongans may not consider fluency in the Tongan language essential toanga faka-Tonga. Seini, when asked whether a person needed to be able to speak Tongan to be Tongan, immediately responded “no.” Morton-Lee (2003) concurs, claiming that young people are more willing to allow for the inability to speak the Tongan language. However, as fluency in Tongan language enables understanding of uniquely Tongan concepts, including those encompassed by ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga, it seems to be a key element in defining Tongan identity. Despite Seini’s adamant declaration here, she has gone on to study Tongan language at university, perhaps realising that she must be competent in the language to fulfil her ambition of being politically realised that she must be competent in the Tongan language to fulfil her ambition of being politically. Seini’s adamant declaration here, she has gone on to study Tongan language at university, perhaps realising that she must be competent in the

obligations between kin which may involve remittances sent by migrants to family in Tonga. These remittances are generally driven by the concept of fetokoni’aki (helping one another) and are a tangible marker of the love and respect between remitters and recipients. Evans (2001) explains that gift exchange is organised through the concepts of ‘ofa (love and generosity), maka’apa’apa (a respectful disposition), and fetokoni’aki all essential elements of the Tongan way. Fetokoni’aki, the quintessential form of generalised reciprocity, is often singled out by Tongans as the defining characteristic of ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga with any and all social ties being best expressed through fetokoni’aki. To practise fetokoni’aki is to show mutual ‘ofa sometimes referred to as ‘ofa faka-Tonga. Gift-giving often involves crops, fish, pigs and other foodstuffs. A family who has provided a feast will redistribute the left-over food (usually plenty) to those who contribute food or labour or attend the feast. During funerals, thousands of dollars worth of food, cash and koloa (treasures, wealth) given to the family of the deceased will be carefully redistributed in accordance with the rank and status of those involved.

‘Ofa is a complex, manifestation of the theme of love and the overriding value of Tongan morality – the reason for their behaviour and institutions. It encompasses love, reverence, honour and humbleness (Kavaliku, 1977). Obedience, a sense of duty and reciprocity are all derived from ‘ofa. Christianity in Tonga requires maka’apa’apa for God and God gives ‘ofa in return (Evans, 2001).

Anga ‘ofa (a loving nature), anga maka’apa’apa, mamahi’i me’a (zealousness in a good cause to the point of pain), tauhi vaha’a (maintaining good relations), and lototō (to be humbly willing, deferential but kindly committed) were held up as core values in Tongan culture by Rev. Dr. Asinate F. Samate (2005) in her keynote address to the 11th Tongan History Conference in Melbourne.

The middle ring of Figure 2 shows the cultural expressions of Tonga. The mastery of Tongan dance, the preparation and cooking of traditional foods, the wearing of traditional clothing such as ta’ovala and kiekie, the production of koloa (e.g. mats, tapa etc...) and carvings, the kava (beverage made from crushed roots), the composing of songs and poems, the skill of an orator in the pulpit, fono or feast are the most visible signs of Tongan culture. However, these human cultural expressions are deeply embedded in ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga and while in an isolated context they may still be a thing of beauty, their meaning is diminished without an understanding of their bedrock, the Tongan way. A poto human being needs ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga to bind, shape them
and define their purpose – to live as an effective person (Evans, 2001) within their environment. To be poto is to be gifted and talented. Gagne’s model shows how giftedness is demonstrated as talent. It can therefore also be used to show how a Tongan child develops into a poto and tākapatotopoto human being.

The Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent

Gagne’s (2008) Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent is used extensively throughout the world as a theoretical framework for defining and identifying gifted and talented students. For educators, one advantage of this model over others is in its view of talent as a developmental process to which schools, among many other catalysts, can make positive or negative contributions.

Gagne (2008) provides a useful overview of the model which is summarised here. Firstly, Gagne argues against the prevalent use of ‘gifted’ and ‘talented’ as synonyms. He defines the two concepts as follows:

**GIFTEDNESS** designates the possession and use of outstanding natural abilities, called aptitudes, in at least one ability domain, to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers.

**TALENT** designates the outstanding mastery of systematically developed abilities, called competencies (knowledge and skills), in at least one field of human activity to a degree that places an individual at least among the top 10% of age peers who are or have been active in that field (p. 1).

He then explains that the two concepts share three characteristics: both refer to human activities, both target individuals who differ from the norm/average and both refer to outstanding behaviours. In order to accurately portray the talent development process, the model also incorporates four other concepts – intrapersonal catalysts, environmental catalysts, learning/practice and chance, as shown in Figure 3 below.

The DMGT proposes four aptitude domains of gifts: intellectual, creative, socio-affective and sensorimotor. Each of these can be divided into any number of categories and can be added to or deleted from as research proposes new taxonomies. Without fixed categories, it allows the model to incorporate categories derived from other cultural skill sets. Natural abilities are manifested to varying degrees in the course of all children’s development but it is only when the level of expression becomes outstanding that the label ‘gifted’ can be used. Gagne (2008) maintains high aptitudes/gifts are observed more easily in young

![Figure 3. The Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent.](DMGT.EN.2K)
children while the influence of environmental factors (which may be negative) is still moderate and largely concern the speed and ease at which they gain skills in a particular domain. This is a good argument for early identification and consultation with parents. Many checklists based on sound research are available to identify the observable behaviours of giftedness. However, some caution needs to be taken to ensure these checklists are culturally-inclusive – an attribute such as ‘asks many questions’ would not be appropriate to a Tongan child socialised to not interrupt adults. Gagne (2008) points out that psychometrically valid measures of natural abilities have been developed for some domains (e.g., intellectual, muscular, creative, motor control) - IQ testing (again, there may be linguistic cultural bias) and fitness testing being considered the most reliable. There are less reliable measures in the other domains (e.g., social, perceptual).

Measuring talent is a straightforward enterprise which corresponds to outstanding performance in the specific skills of any occupational field. During the developmental phase of any talent, normative assessments, such as exams, tests, competitions, and scholarships, present themselves. Beyond the training phase, however, assessments are much less formal and often by word of mouth. In Tongan situations, talent may be ‘measured’ against cultural parameters such as those involved in becoming poto and the ‘assessment’ expressed by community experts’ approval/disapproval. New Zealand teachers need to develop relationships with such Tongan experts and seek their advice and guidance in order to recognise and develop their students’ talent.

Developmental processes can take four different forms – maturation, informal learning, formal non-institutional learning and formal institutional learning. Maturation is a process totally controlled by the genome but can be influenced by factors such as nutrition, disease and exposure to toxins. Informal learning corresponds essentially to knowledge and skills acquired during daily activities. Many of the attributes of a poto Tongan will have been acquired this way. Formal non-institutional learning corresponds to autodidactic or self-taught learning. For instance, the talent development of accomplished musical performers, The Kami’s, a Tongan family in Australia, have followed this process. Ka’ili (2005) reports that this family give credit to God for blessing them with the talent and gift to create and make music because none of the children in the family had received professional lessons in music or in playing any instruments. The most common learning process remains institutionally-based and leads to some form of official recognition of competency: going to school, joining a sports team, enrolling in music lessons or a cooking academy are all examples of formal institutional learning. Many Tongan traditional skills are developed within church contexts which gives them widespread recognition in the Tongan community.

‘Catalyst’ is a term Gagne (2008) has borrowed from chemistry. A catalyst designates chemical substances introduced into a chemical reaction usually to accelerate it. At the end, these contributors regain their initial state: catalysts contribute to a reaction without being constituents of the final product. In the case of talent development the constituent elements are the natural abilities, which are slowly transformed into specific skills. Talent is strictly measured through the level of skill mastery; neither the type of the contributing catalysts nor the strength of their contribution is relevant to that assessment. The DMGT recognises three types of catalysts: intrapersonal, environmental and chance.

Gagne (2008) divides the intrapersonal catalysts into physical and mental traits, as well as goal-management factors. Physical templates, for instance, have been defined for many sports – height is advantageous in netball and basketball, strength and muscle mass in the front row of a rugby scrum. Psychological factors are numerous and Gagne admits that the goal management categories created so far – motivation, volition, self-management and personality – may not be exhaustive. These categories are highly influenced by culture.

Environmental factors can have positive or negative impact. Gagne (2008) divides three distinct environmental inputs in the DMGT: milieu, individuals, and provisions. The ‘persons’ category has, perhaps, created the most controversy with many social scientists, who hold the belief that nurture is a more powerful agent than nature, demonstrating in the literature that significant people in the lives of the gifted and talented can have considerable influence on talent development.

Gagne (2002) credits the first extensive examination of the role of chance in talent development to Abraham Tannenbaum. Gagne (2002) first introduced it into the DMGT among the environmental catalysts but soon realised its influence was greater than that. Most importantly, individuals have no control over their genetic inheritance or the circumstances into which they are born. There is some degree of chance in all the causal components of the model, except the learning and practising process.

Gagne (2008) explains why the ten percent threshold was chosen for the DMGT stressing
that different reference groups need to be used for identifying gifted individuals and talented individuals. His ten percent avoids restricting giftedness to exceptional giftedness, a rare phenomenon, and includes the “garden variety” of gifted and talented individuals. Pragmatic reasons dictate the use of a fairly broad prevalence estimate to protect those who are gifted and talented from an assumption that, if giftedness is so rare, time and money does not need to be allocated to cater to their special needs.

The relationships among the six elements of the model (gifts, chance, intrapersonal catalysts, environmental catalysts, learning and practising, and talents) are expressed through a complex pattern of interactions. The most fundamental interaction is the causal impact of gifts on talents, gifts being the constituent elements (raw materials) of talent/s, the presence of talent/s implies underlying gift/s. However, the reverse is not true – gifts can remain undeveloped. After consideration of empirical data, Gagne (2002) places the five components of the model in the following decreasing order of causal impact on talent emergence: chance, gifts, intrapersonal, learning/practice, environment. The relative importance of intrapersonal factors – motivation and self-management especially – has implications for teachers of the gifted, and can be culturally influenced. Tongan students can be motivated by *fetokoni’aki*, the desire to give back to Tongan society and their families.

**Personalising the DMGT**

Gagne’s DMGT was directly applied to the lives of Seini and Julia, incorporating Tongan elements which clearly show the girls’ unique profiles. These profiles were constructed through interviews with them and people significant to them (friends, relations and teachers) whom they nominated. Observations were made of them as they went about their daily lives and their teachers contributed to a survey. The ability of the model to include culturally-specific catalysts is indicative of its flexibility and cultural validity. All of the elements of the model can be interpreted through different cultural lenses and it is for this reason this model was used to investigate gifted and talented Tongan individuals.

Figures 4 and 5, shown below, are visual representations of Seini’s and Julia’s processes of talent development, highlighting the catalysts for transforming their gifts. Seini was able to convert her gifts of metacognition, fluid reasoning, verbal memory, imagination, originality, communication and influence to cultural, academic, and sporting leadership roles. Despite lacking knowledge of faka-Tonga, other cultural qualities and Tongan ways of being acted as catalysts for her cultural talents.

As the model shows for Julia (Figure 5), her gifts of verbal memory, perception, intelligence, communication, influence and sensorimotor

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**Figure 4.** The DMGT model and Seini.

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**Figure 5.** The DMGT model and Julia.
skills were developed through music lessons, performance opportunities at church and school, English language development, and cultural identity. Julia’s talents of leadership, performance, and sport are both generic and culturally-specific. Julia demonstrated poto through her acute awareness of the complexities of Tongan society. For both gifted young women, the impact of chance played a role in how their cultural abilities and qualities have been applied and developed: as children of migrants into New Zealand, their environment and the aspirations of their parents have had an influence.

Julia and Seini were both justified in being nominated as “gifted and talented” students. However, their schools contributed to their talent development in a fairly ad hoc way; the Deputy Principal at Seini’s school noted that this was more by default than design. In the DMGT, formal schooling fits best as an environmental catalyst although it can contribute to intrapersonal catalysts by influencing such factors as motivation and self-management. The schools were not neighbourhood schools for the girls and their parents deliberately chose schools that best fitted with their family values. These values in both families included elements of ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga (the Tongan way). For Julia, ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga was the basis of family life whereas Seini’s family were much more assimilated into pālangi lifestyle and western ways. She has, as Tiatia (1998) has identified, the unique identity of the New Zealand-born which requires that they need to construct for themselves a paradigm that is uniquely their own to grant them empowerment of voice and a visible presence. In order to give a more Tongan shape to this paradigm, Seini’s parents elected to send her to a school where Tongan culture was an integral part of school life in a deliberate effort to improve her knowledge of Tongan language and ‘ulungaanga faka-Tonga. For both girls their culture became more important as they developed their adolescent identities.

There is growing recognition of the importance of understanding Pasifika perspectives of giftedness and talent, but there is very little information (based on practice, theory or research) to help teachers unpack those perspectives. As a minority population, it is likely that Pasifika students have been under-represented in programmes and provisions for gifted and talented students. How can the under-representation of our Pasifika students be addressed without a wide base of research and practice to help unpack and explain their unique cultural perspectives? One approach is to work with parents, families, communities, and gifted and talented Pasifika students to explore broader concepts of giftedness and talent. Gagne’s model can serve as a framework for analysing gifts and their realisation as talents based on catalysts, chance, and processes of development. New Zealand teachers need to consider how they contribute to the ‘design’ of talent development. The default position does not always enable Pasifika students to achieve the hopes and aspirations of their communities, families and themselves.
REFERENCES


AUTHORS’ PROFILES

Ingrid Frengley-Vaipuna has spent 30 years teaching (mostly English) in Australia, Tonga and New Zealand and is currently Deputy Principal at Patea Area School in South Taranaki. She has recently moved onto a small lifestyle block in Patea and is putting a lifelong interest in ensuring a sustainable future into practice. She has always been interested in the education of gifted students and completed a MEd thesis titled Creating Kakala: Gifted and Talented Tongan Secondary School Students in New Zealand in 2007. She worked for Massey University as an adviser in Gifted and Talented education 2007-2008. She is married to Paul Vaipuna, is the mother of four adult and teenaged children, and Oma to four grandchildren who reflect the ethnically diverse family theme: one Māori, one Tongan and Australian twins!

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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a small action research project carried out by a Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) in a small rural, full primary school in New Zealand. It focused on improving the literacy outcomes for Years 5-8 boys in the school by way of a boys’-only writing group. Results show that the boys’-only learning group had a positive impact on the students’ engagement and motivation for learning and improved literacy outcomes.

INTRODUCTION

In 2010, as a result of my involvement in a SENCO professional development group, I devised an action research plan to improve the literacy outcomes of a group of Years 5-8 boys at my school. At the time I taught at a small, decile 6, rural full primary school in the central North Island. The question that I posed for the action research was “Do Years 5-8 boys’ writing AsTTle scores improve with the implementation of a boys’ writing group which focuses on explicitly teaching writing?” I wanted to improve literacy levels for this cohort of boys, specifically AsTTle writing scores, and I also wanted to improve their engagement in literacy and inquiry. The action research model that I used was based on the work of Mills (2007). An important part of this action research process is articulating my beliefs in relation to boys’ literacy. It is an important part of action research as it allows the teacher-researcher to think about the beliefs that shape their attitudes and practices.

My beliefs/understandings prior to the intervention were:

- Boys work best in a competitive environment.
- The learning can be geared specifically to their areas of interest.
- Engaging with a positive male role model will have an impact on the boys attitudes towards school and also future learning.
- Boys may be more responsive to a male teacher than a female teacher.
- Girls tend to dominate in the regular class environment – they enjoy the role of researcher and writer, and boys with literacy difficulty can opt out – they will not be able to opt out in this small group.
- Smaller group sizes mean more teacher-to-pupil contact. Increasing the opportunities for positive relationships between teacher and student may have positive outcomes.

Table 1 summarises the background to the action research process (see next page).

INTERVENTION

The intervention began with having boys-only groups undertake specialised inquiry learning, with a positive male role model. The idea was that using the motivational experiences provided in the boys’ inquiry class the teacher could build on these to improve the writing results of this cohort of boys. After two terms it became clear that this process was not having a significant impact on the boys AsTTle writing results due to a range of variables and it was decided that we would be more explicit in our intervention.

The second intervention began with using current assessment data gathered from the class teaching programme, using AsTTle, to select a group of Years 5-8 boys who were working at a level below and significantly below their expected AsTTle level. These boys were grouped into small focus teaching groups and were taught regularly, in one hour sessions, throughout Terms 3 and 4 of 2010.

To scaffold their writing, Stephen Graham’s Explicitly Teaching Writing frameworks and techniques were used (see Graham, MacArthur & Fitzgerald, 2007). I also ensured the children’s
Weaving educational threads. Weaving educational practice.

Table 1

**Background**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Who is involved?</th>
<th>Years 5-8 boys Classroom teachers Outside male role models</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is happening?</td>
<td>This cohort of boys has an historical trend of underachievement in literacy, specifically in writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When is it happening?</td>
<td>Across a period of years as evidenced by an Analysis of Variance/Reporting to the Board of Trustees.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How is it happening?</td>
<td>Interventions: RRAP, RTLit, RTLB. Professional development in reading in the Junior School and professional development focused on raising reading achievement throughout the school including Māori student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is this happening?</td>
<td>The boys have had a prolonged experience of finding literacy difficult and are giving up and becoming disengaged. As a result they have low personal expectations regarding their success in literacy and a place a low value on literacy in general. Teaching of Writing – we are “missing the mark”. We have not had significant PD in writing in the 3½ years I have been at the school but we believe we have excellent teaching of writing – so why is it happening? This could be an area for future development.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

**Timeline for Terms 3 and 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase five: Teaching of Writing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- ensure effective teaching/learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- regular professional discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Set up regular meetings with teachers to ensure firm link with class programme is established Further professional readings to share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk 3 T3</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wk 6 T3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase six: Collect data:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Writing Sample – asTTle results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Student Voice – From boy writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from me – Boys’ writing teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from class teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from the boys</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet with teachers to plan for Term 4 writers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Start of Term 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase seven: Writing teaching:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- ensure effective teaching/learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- regular professional discussion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Set up regular meetings with team members to ensure firm link with class programme is established Further professional readings to share</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk 3 T4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wk 6 T4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase eight: Reflections:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- from myself – writing teacher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- from class teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Report on programme prepared</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- share with Principal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- share with team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- share with BOT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- share with RTLB service/Senco Cluster Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From final report prepare an action plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October</td>
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<tr>
<td>November</td>
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</table>
motivation by beginning each writing session with an engagement or language experience task. This programme was carefully matched to the current class programme, and in fact I would attempt to share a new writing genre or framework prior to the classroom programme, thus empowering these students within their own class. We explored a range of genre during this time; recount, response, argument or exposition. At the end of the term the boys were sampled again using asTTle and it is these results that are shared in this report.

During the process I needed to make a variety of changes to respond to external influences. For example, the project initially began with a male teacher providing the programme, but after his resignation, I took on the role of teacher but still wanted to allow for the positive male role model so created ways to bring men from the local community in to work with the boys. After our mid-point data reflected no significant change in asTTle results, we decided an explicit intervention in writing would need to occur. A further change was in response to timetable changes in the school. I began teaching writing in year groups, but ultimately had to work with class groups as this had less impact on the home classroom and also enabled me to make stronger connections with their class writing programme, for the benefit of the boys.

Table 2 (previous page) outlines the Timeline for Terms 3 and 4.

RESULTS

Data: Boys’ Writers Group 1 (Room 3 boys or Years 5-6 boys)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room 3 Boys’ Writing Group - April asTTle Writing Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At critical level 38% or 3 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At expected level 13% or 1 student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below expected level 49% or 4 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room 3 Boys’ Writing Group - September asTTle Writing Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below expected level 75% or 6 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At expected level 25% or 2 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANALYSIS

There is a significant shift with all boys no longer at a ‘critical’ level and now achieving at ‘below the expected’ level. There has also been another boy reach at ‘expected’ level. These results suggest that the boys’ writing group could have had an impact on the asTTle writing results of this cohort.

Data: Boys’ Writers Group 2 (Room 2 boys or Year 6-7 boys)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room 2 Boys’ Writing Group - April asTTle Writing Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At critical level 57% or 4 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below expected level 43% or 3 students</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Room 2 Boys’ Writing Group - September asTTle Writing Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Below expected level 86% or 6 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At expected level 14% or 1 student</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANALYSIS

There has been a significant shift with all boys no longer at ‘critical’ levels and now achieving at ‘below expected’ levels. One student was working at the ‘expected’ level. These suggest that the boys’ writing group could have had an impact on the asTTle writing results of this cohort.
RESULTS
Data: Boys’ Writers Group 3 (Room 1 boys or Years 7-8 boys)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Boys’ Writing Group - April asTTle Writing Results</th>
<th>Boys’ Writing Group - September asTTle Writing Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At critical level 100% or 5 students</td>
<td>At critical level 60% or 3 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>At expected level 5% or 1 student</td>
<td>Below expected level 40% or 2 students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below expected level 35% or 7 students</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

ANALYSIS
Two students have shifted from working at ‘critical’ level and are now achieving at ‘below expected’ level. These results would indicate that the boys’ writers group could have had an impact on asTTle writing results.

OVERALL RESULTS
Data: All Boys from the Boys’ Writers Group

These results clearly show a shift in the boys’ achievement in writing, using the asTTle Writing Sample. The number of boys that were achieving ‘critical’ results from the April asTTle results to the September asTTle results has significantly improved. There has also been a small shift, with one more child achieving at ‘expected’ level.

Based on these results I could conclude that **Years 5-8 Boys’ writing asTTle scores do improve with the implementation of a boys’ writing group which focuses on ‘Explicitly Teaching Writing’**.

FURTHER COMMENT
There are other variables that could have also contributed to the change in asTTle writing results that are not attributable to the boys’ writing group.

All the classroom teachers had recent professional development in the teaching of writing and, as a result, their teaching practice has changed considerably. The teachers are now clearly providing models of expected writing, are assisting their learners in the classroom in unpacking the model and using frameworks to assist the children to plan for their writing. The teachers are also now using success criteria and are also working with their children consistently in guided instructional writing groups.

As a result it is unclear as to what has directly contributed to the improvements in asTTle writing. It could be the boys’-only writing group, but it could also be the changes in teaching practice in their home classrooms.
Yet there has been a school-wide drop in achievement in writing from the April to September asTTle writing samples. In particular the Years 6 and 7 cohort have shifted with 39% of all Year 7 students achieving at or above expectation (compared to 68% in 2009) and 47% of all Year 6 students achieving at or above expectation (compared to 79% in 2009). However, there was a shift of five Year 6 students and three Year 7 students from being ‘critical/well below expectation’ in April into the ‘below expectation’ category in September.

These results are surprising to both the management and teaching team at the school. It was expected with the improved teaching practice asTTle writing results would improve to match.

As the boys’ writing group results have improved against a school-wide trend of falling results it could be concluded that having a boys’-only writing group which focuses on explicitly teaching writing has a significant impact on their asTTle writing results.

To further indicate the success of the boys’ writers group I have included both teacher and student comments regarding engagement and motivation for writing, which are not measurable by the asTTle writing test.

**STUDENT VOICE**

Comments about engagement/motivation for learning:
- We do experiments like the mini rockets and not just writing.
- It’s fun.
- Gives us more experience.
- We take away from it our ability to write.

Comments about being in an all-boy learning environment:
- It’s better being just boys – boys get on together better than girls.
- Don’t argue and we can do stuff we like doing like science experiments.
- We get used to working together.
- Girls just start talking or do their hair. They are annoying.
Comments about their attitudes to writing after the Inquiry Group:
- My teacher said I should be impressed with my writing result after being in the group and that she is proud of me.
- I know how to put the full stops in a sentence now, so I don’t have to do press ups.
- I didn’t like writing at the start of the group, but now it’s much easier.
- I like having the statement of position (I think this refers to the framework).

TEACHERS’ VOICE
Comments about engagement and attitude of the boys:
- The boys were motivated about going to writing. The only session they weren’t keen on was Friday after lunch.
- Room 2 boys really enjoyed and were motivated by the procedural writing especially they liked all the hands-on projects e.g rockets and cooking. The use of the scaffold was revolutionary and held their attention. It was harder during production for obvious reasons as they didn’t want to miss out on what was happening in class. The boys also enjoyed having the prior knowledge and being the expert in class if they had learnt a concept before being taught in class.
- The boys really enjoy the writing sessions and are always eager to get more individual teaching.

Comments about the impact of the group on their writing ability:
- In terms of impact on their writing, it helped reinforce the ideas from the current unit being studied in class. They were very familiar with expositions in particular and found writing in the scaffold helpful.
- Huge impact on their perception of their own writing and effort from all the boys. I was blown away by the writing samples and it was noticeable the boys who hadn’t been in the writing group as their grasp wasn’t as strong. The writing group and in-class work matched perfectly. The boys were all glad they did their sample in the resource room with Kelly as they appreciated the smaller numbers and chance to ask more questions.
- Coming up to the writing sample it was great and all the boys (as well as the rest of the class) improved from their last writing sample.

Comments about any issues resulting from the project:
- Maybe each child could have some specific targeted goals set from asTTle that appear in their success criteria (surface features) every time they write so they are regularly analysing their progress. Surface features are still an area of concern so the goals may help here.
- I would like to have an extension writing group for my top writers to extend them and have the same success these boys have had.
- When the classes were taken individually this was better as the teaching could be more directed to what they were learning in class and they could receive more focused teaching. It also meant that in class I could focus on the higher achieving writers or the struggling girl-writers more.

FINAL COMMENT
It is clear from this action research it is not enough to have a boys’-only teaching group to have an impact on their asTTle writing results. The group needs to focus on explicitly teaching writing.

The data following the Boys’ inquiry project was unclear and did not show any significant change in asTTle writing results, although there were several outside influences which created variables making it impossible to accurately measure the effect of this programme. These included:
- The change of inquiry teacher from a male to female teacher.
- The change of classroom teacher from an experienced teacher to a beginning teacher.
- The effect of writing a different genre between asTTle writing samples and that teachers felt that writing a poetic genre was easier for the learners than the transactional genre.
- The lack of asTTle sample at the start and close of the second boys’ inquiry group making it impossible to measure the impact of the group on their writing results.
What was clear was that the boys enjoyed being part of a boys'-only group. They found the opportunity to work in a group that was based on meeting their interests, and not that of the girls, was motivating. They also enjoyed the smaller group numbers and the resulting regularity of being able to get help from the teacher.

The data following the writing project was clearer and indicates clearly that having a boys'-only writing group has a positive impact on their asTTle writing results. All class groups and the overall group showed a positive shift in results, with fewer children achieving at ‘critical’ levels and moving into working ‘below expectation’. These results are especially clear given that there is a school-wide trend of a decrease in asTTle writing results in the Years 6 and 7 cohorts.

This data could be affected by external influences; primarily that of the teachers receiving recent professional development and significantly changing their teaching practice. As a result it is not clear now whether it was the writing group or change in teacher practice that was the contributing factor towards these improved asTTle results.

Once again the feedback from the students and teachers was very positive. The boys enjoyed the learning environment that was free from girls, and felt that this enabled them to work together more positively. The teachers all reported they were motivated about going to writing and felt that it may have had a positive impact on the results.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Boys'-only learning groups have a clear impact on their engagement and motivation for learning. I would recommend that boys'-only learning continue in the future.

The data suggests that the boys'-only writers group had an impact on asTTle writing results, against a school-wide trend of a decrease in writing. Therefore I recommend having a boys'-only group, which focuses on explicitly teaching writing, for our at-risk boy writers in Years 6-8 in 2011.

REFERENCES


AUTHOR’S PROFILE

Kelly Mercer

Kelly Mercer undertook the Action Research Project on Boys’ Learning while in the position of Deputy Principal and SENCO at a rural school in the Central North Island. She is passionate about making a difference for students and was curious to see if working with a boys'-only group in inquiry and writing could have an impact on student engagement and ultimately on achievement in writing.

Kelly has had 17 years of teaching experience in a range of decile and districts within the Northland and Manawatu Region and is currently the Associate Principal of Riverdale School.

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I Miss My Mochaccino

Lisa Margrain
Student, studying concurrently at Whitireia Polytechnic and Massey University

Storied experience

Keywords: Communication, speech-language therapy, stammer, stutter

INTRODUCTION

I am a 22-year-old artist, a sister, daughter, and stutterer. I remember having speech-language therapy when I was in primary school, but I don’t remember stuttering or being teased about it at that age – it was other things that people teased me about. It was only in my late teenage years that I became more self-conscious and stressed about stuttering and it has influenced many daily and long-term decisions. At this stage of my life, in the last few weeks of my art degree, I have been reflecting on my future and know that I need to accept this aspect of who I am to do well in my future career. This storied experience is part of self-reflection for this purpose, and it may let readers know about what it is like to live with a stutter.

BACKGROUND

Stuttering is a communication disorder which can include repetitions (re re re peating sounds), prolongations (been ssssstuck), or having gaps in speech (blocks, with no sound). Stuttering is also known as stammering, although the correct term is actually dysphemia. One per cent of people stutter, so that is 40,000 people in New Zealand. There is support for children, but very little assistance for adults. Famous stutterers include Lewis Carroll who was not allowed to enter the priesthood because of his stutter but instead wrote books such as Alice in Wonderland. Marilyn Monroe was reportedly a stutterer whose measured, breathy, speech may have been her way of managing her stutter. The recent movie The King’s Speech, starring Colin Firth, used the story of King George VI to highlight the stress and effort a stutterer experiences. The movie also illustrated the difference between strategies and ‘cure’ and the lifelong nature of this experience for some people.

MY EXPERIENCE

My stuttering becomes more pronounced when I am tired, stressed or nervous. This becomes a vicious circle as the more I stutter the more stressed I feel about talking. Even in those situations when I am with people who I am familiar and comfortable with, my stuttering becomes more pronounced when I am tired. At the beginning of a school term I can order a mochaccino, but by the end of term I have to order a cappuccino because I stutter over the ‘M’ too much. Similarly, although I love Big Mac combos, sometimes I just have to choose a Chicken McCheese even though I don’t want it. I’ve had to teach myself to like to eat and drink things I don’t prefer just because they are easier to order.

I may always have a stutter, and is not something that can be cured or that I’ll grow out of. On bad days I’ll avoid people as much as possible. I can think of days when I’ve got on a bus, been unable to say where I want to go, and just got off again and walked home. On good days people don’t even realise that I stutter – and in fact some people that have known me for a long time still don’t really notice that I stutter. This is because I work enormously hard at ‘covering’ my disfluency by choosing alternative words. This is not always possible, for example the initial letters ‘L’ and ‘M’ of my name are amongst those that are often hard for me to say.

Talking on the telephone is harder than face to face, and I will avoid that whenever possible. Being able to use the internet for many bookings and enquiries is my first option always, but if that is not possible then I would much rather go to see someone face-to-face than have to call them by ‘phone. This is because when people can read my body language they are more likely to be patient and allow me to finish my sentence. Over the ‘phone people often misinterpret silence.

MY STRATEGIES

Some of the strategies that I learned when I was at primary school have remained memorable, and there are still stickers in our house provided by the Ministry of Education speech-language therapists with messages on that say “Remember your slow talking” (with a picture of a tortoise) and “soften your consonants” (with a picture of a soft cuddly teddy bear). An example of softening consonants is...
that instead of saying “cat” with a hard “k” initial sound I can blow a soft vowel sound before the beginning of the word. It is still hard for me to do this without worrying that people think I speak weirdly, but it does help the sound to come out. When I was younger it was also suggested that it could be easier for me to substitute other words at times for those that are tricky to say. This is the strategy that I have probably used most to date.

I lie awake at night thinking of all the people I am going to meet the next day and all the conversations I might have, and talk the words aloud in my mind to figure out which I might stumble over the most, then choose alternative words. Even when I am speaking face-to-face with people I will run the conversation in parallel in my head a few words ahead to try to substitute words in time. This becomes quite exhausting. It also results in the use of more ‘fillers’ like “aah” and “um” while I think of replacement words, which might look to people as if I am having to figure out content knowledge even when I do know my topic well.

Sometimes there are no alternative words, or they don’t readily come to mind, and then I might avoid speaking. At a recent block course for extramural students we were asked to note down some critical reflections on The Tempest, by Shakespeare. When the lecturer asked if there were any other ideas I wouldn’t contribute my idea because I knew I would stutter, despite the student next to me encouraging me to contribute my comment because it added something new. When it is really important to say something and I know that I will struggle over a word I will sometimes use a strategy of pretending that I have forgotten a term. For example, I recently wanted to refer to the artist Andy Goldsworthy, but instead said “the guy who did a little installation from nature”. Goldsworthy is a hard word to say because of the hard “G” sound and because there is a break in the word between “Golds” and “worthy”. As another example, I wanted to comment on a painting of a running dog by the artist Balla. Because a “B” is a hard initial letter for me to say, instead I said “you know, that futuristic painter who did the work with the dog and the moving leg”. I worry that people think I am unintelligent, or unprepared, or that I don’t know as much as I do because of my use of this strategy.

In August 2011 I attended an intensive speech-language therapy block course in Christchurch, for adult stutterers. During the three days of therapy I was encouraged to discontinue my strategy of avoiding words and to push myself to say what it is that I really have to contribute. I have learned to monitor the levels of my stuttering severity, naturalness scale, and anxiety. I also learned that for every stutterer the mix will be different: some people stutter more profoundly but are less anxious about it, others like myself have a relatively mild stutter but are more anxious. The level of ‘naturalness’ also differs between stutterers. On a one to ten scale, with ten representing an absolute robotic monotone with full, round sounds, most people are within the two to five range.

I gesture a lot to support communication. For example the letter “L” is hard to say, so instead of saying “left” I might say “that way” and point left. As a student of Art and English, I feel more comfortable to use visual and written kinds of communication than verbal.

PEOPLE’S REACTIONS

Most people make almost no reaction to my stuttering. My friends and family accept me fully, and as noted earlier, some people may not even notice my stutter that much. However, I have also had some very distressing experiences that outweigh others. Only a few months ago I telephoned someone about exhibiting my artwork, and the man actually laughed at my stutter and hung up on me. Other people laugh at characters on TV who stutter or have other kinds of speech-language disorder, such as lisps, without realising that I take this laughter personally. It is not helped that the characters on TV who are stutterers are often portrayed as idiots, for example the character of Albert Arkwright, played by Ronnie Barker in Open All Hours, or the Warner Brothers’ character Porky Pig.

Some people seem to think that because the stutter can be inconsistent, that if I tried harder I could manage it better, without realising that every hour of every day I work really hard to manage the stutter. When I was at school I detested having to read aloud, and some of my teachers insisted that I could do it and was just being objectionable if I resisted. Other people appear confused as when I do give speeches and presentations I often get a good grade, so they think that my anxiety must have just been nerves or lack of confidence in public speaking. There is an enormous difference between public speaking skills and speech-therapy strategies.

FEEDBACK

The feedback and advice I would give to teachers and anyone else who interacts with someone who stutters include the following:

- Don’t feel you have to comment on the stutter (mostly I’d rather not discuss it!).
- Be patient with gaps and pauses.
• Find opportunities to show that you value the person as anyone will have less anxiety when part of a positive relationship.
• Understand that someone can have a disorder even if it isn’t always visible.
• Avoid requiring anyone to read or recite aloud to a group unless absolutely necessary.
• Offer a range of assessment tasks where possible - speeches and oral presentations could be substituted with essays, portfolios, powerpoint slides supported by notes rather than verbal explanation. There are many ways to show learning!
• Offer online contact, including email and facebook, as alternatives to telephone contact.

FINDING OUT MORE

• The Stuttering Treatment and Research Trust (START) is based in Parnell, Auckland. The website gives information and contact details at www.stuttering.co.nz
• Speak Easy is a support group with regional networks. Contact details and general information about stuttering can be found at www.stuttering-answers.com
• Speech-therapy training is offered by Canterbury University, Massey University at Albany, and the University of Auckland.
• The Ministry of Education, Special Education offers speech-language services to children nation-wide, depending on intake criteria.

AUTHOR'S PROFILE

Lisa Margrain

Lisa Margrain is a tertiary student at Whitireia Polytechnic and expects to complete her Bachelor of Applied Arts in November 2011, majoring in Visual Art and Design. Her chosen medium is painting and she has had work exhibited at Pataka Museum of Arts and Cultures (2010), the Wai Art National Portrait Awards at the Carterton Exhibition Centre (2011), and Te Manawa Museum of Art, Science and History (2011). In August 2011 Lisa returned to her previous secondary school, St Oran’s College, to present a solo exhibition, titled Gaia.

Lisa attended Dyer St and Pinehaven primary schools in the Hutt Valley, then St Oran’s College for Years 7-13. She has a Certificate of Applied Visual Imaging from UCOL. While studying her art degree full-time at Whitireia Polytechnic in Porirua, Lisa additionally studies English and Media Studies extramurally from Massey University, and works weekends and holiday breaks at Te Manawa Museum of Art, Science and History in Palmerston North. She hopes to continue to work in gallery/museum environments, learn curatorial skills, and one day have her own art gallery.

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MAKING CLASSROOM ASSESSMENT WORK
Anne Davies and Mary Hill

The preface to this review uses an environmental metaphor, incorporating student growth, shelter and conditions, to scaffold us into thinking about assessment for learning rather than assessment of learning. Acknowledged as an adapted text from Canadian and American sources, this neat little book has been sensitively reworked to a New Zealand classroom context.

The book is clear and ambitious in its aim to link research with classroom practice and it delivers on that promise. The links with New Zealand research are also useful, up-to-date and relevant. For example, the Nuthall and NEMP resource are good reminders that New Zealanders do not have to travel far to retrieve some high quality assessment information themselves.

The short summaries at the beginning of each chapter are useful thinking and reflection tools. The text is clear and assessible. The diagrams and real illustrations of students’ work give a sense of a working document for busy practitioners. In addition, the variety of examples of ways to engage students is a useful reminder when things get a little tired and you are looking for something new to make your own teaching more interesting. The section on involving parents is a strength, and clearly grounded in the schools acknowledged at the back of the text.

Nevertheless, I get the sense the book is a little like ‘mother and apple pie’. Teachers know it is important to engage students in things they are interested in, however, I am not clear what new information this book adds to the shelves of busy New Zealand teachers. In addition, one of the key missing aspects to this book is a narrative on assessing against the new ‘standards’ which the Minister of Education is keen to pursue. Perhaps there is a rationale for this. However, it would have been valuable to have acknowledged the ‘elephant in the room’ rather than ignoring it. Further, the book is not specific in catering for the diversity that is evident in most New Zealand classrooms. I can see how the examples do cater for student diversity but it is not made clear, particularly in terms of cultural diversity, how student similarities and differences will be catered for in busy classrooms.

So who is the audience? I suggest beginning teachers who can use and develop the rich range of resources associated with the book. The New Zealand aspect is rich and clear and conveys the sense of both teachers as learners for assessment and examples that can be translated into actual classroom practice.

In summary, this is an accessible and useful reminder that learning can and should be supported by assessment; that assessment is for learning. A good book for the staffroom and teachers who want to remind themselves that classrooms are educational environments where professionalism is informed by judgement and co-construction of the learning process with students, fellow professionals and parents.

REVIEWER’S PROFILE
Gwen Gilmore is a Senior Tutor in the school of Curriculum and Pedagogy at Massey University where she teaches in undergraduate and postgraduate papers on inclusion and special education. She researches in the area of student inclusion/exclusion and professionalism. Before coming to Massey she led a large UK school improvement partnership in the South West of the UK. She has 22 years of other teaching experience in New Zealand secondary schools, been a Primary Principal and delivered a contract on Special Education 2000.

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BIBLIOGRAPhICAL DATA
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MOTIVATING LITERACY LEARNERS IN TODAY’S WORLD

Faye Parkhill, Gail Gillon, Jo Fletcher

Motivating Literacy Learners in Today’s World, as the title implies, forwards the assertion that motivation is the key in literacy acquisition. Throughout the chapters, authored by a number of people with acknowledged research and/or practice in a range of literacy fields, is the underlying theme of engagement of students in literacy-based activities that will provide success and enhance students’ literacy self-concept.

The ideas and strategies presented by the authors across the chapters, aligns with a constructivist concept of motivation (Oldfather, 1992) whereby teachers develop and value learners’ own sense of knowing and learning. Underpinning the theme of the book is the principle of motivating children through sharing the ownership of knowing and facilitating growing awareness by learners of their own construction of meaning.

The chapters cover involvement of students in reading, writing and oral language activities that are cognisant of culturally-appropriate pedagogical practices that engender and promote motivation for effective literacy acquisition. Echoing the three aspects of literacy acquisition that run through the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007) and forwarded in supporting Ministry of Education literature (Ministry of Education, 2003, 2009) of learning the code, making meaning, and thinking critically, the authors of chapters in this book comment on challenges that a number of students face in their progress towards literacy acquisition. Issues of phonological awareness, dyslexia, and oral language comprehension are introduced and explored.

Aligned with the constructivist concept of motivation is the connection addressed in the book between who the learners are (cultural perspectives and personal experiences) and what the learners are exposed to and do in school. Pertinent to the New Zealand context are chapters commenting on motivating Māori students in literacy, motivating Pasifika students in literacy, and Asian student voices. Linking to the personal experiences of the learners is the idea of multiliteracies in the current age of new technologies which are playing an increasingly significant role in making sense of the world for today’s young people. The chapter in the book addressing this issue provides starting ideas and thoughts for teachers to consider.

A favourable feature of the book is the logically structured chapters written in language that is meaningful to both academics and classroom practitioners. Chapters are introduced and concluded concisely and precisely. Most chapters include implications for teachers and/or forward critical questions to challenge practitioners to reflect on their pedagogical practice. At a time when literacy acquisition plays an ever-growing importance in how people are able to contribute and effectively exist in society, this book offers teachers and all educationalists practical guidance and ideas based on sound research.

References


REVIEWER’S PROFILE

Jeanette Smales

Reviewed by Jeanette Smales who up until recently taught across a number of papers in preservice teacher education at Massey University, including the area of literacy. Prior to this Jeanette was a primary school principal and taught across all levels of the primary school sector for over thirty years. Jeanette has also been a Limited Statutory Manager in schools experiencing difficulties.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL DATA

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Submission Guidelines

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  - **Storied Experience** – Papers reporting the experiences of children, parents, caregivers, teachers, support staff and professionals in various learning settings. (Up to 1,500 words).

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