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# Comment

Three articles in this edition of *Early Childhood Folio* have an ICT and assessment emphasis. In a researcher–teacher collaboration, Elaine Khoo, Rosina Merry, and Tim Bennett explore the extent to which the Apple iPad can be used to support assessment in an early childhood education context. Through the story of one child who uses an iPad to participate in the creation of her own Learning Story, the article captures some ways in which children can co-construct assessments of their own learning with the teacher. Use of an iPad for these purposes enables teachers to come to know about children’s areas of interest and children to conceptualise their own learning progress.

Two articles, by Nicola Goodman and Sue Cherrington, and Tracey Hooker, explore the views of early childhood service participants about the value and use of e-portfolios within their children’s ECE settings. The topic is timely as e-portfolios have been little researched yet their digital nature makes them conceptually different from paper-based portfolios. The system used in the early childhood settings was Educa. Both articles are based on surveys of teachers, parents, and whānau, and qualitative data. Goodman and Cherrington also used data from management perspectives and Hooker’s study compared paper-based portfolios and online e-Portfolios. These articles have a central focus on communication between parents and teachers, and parent and whānau engagement in their children’s learning. This emphasis is derived from research evidence that encouraging partnership with families and whānau in relation to educational aims, and

encouraging family contribution in assessment, are valuable practices that help to promote positive outcomes for children. In common, both reported studies found moderate to high levels of engagement and interaction between parents and teachers regarding children’s experiences and learning in their services and home through the online e-Portfolio system. In Hooker’s study, half the parents surveyed were also accessing the paper-based portfolio; in Goodman and Cherrington’s study, some teachers and management maintained paper-based portfolios or printed photographs so whānau who were not using the e-Portfolio system did not miss out. The findings underscore a need for all parents to have equitable access to information about their child in forms they can understand and act on.

Despite the alignment between the curriculum strands of *Tē Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 1996) and the key competencies of *The New Zealand Curriculum* (Ministry of Education, 2007), there has been little investigation of how the dispositional learning outcomes recognised in early childhood “travel” when the child transitions to school. Keryn Davis and colleagues, in “Beyond the Gate: A Case Study of Dispositional Learning from Kindergarten to School”, explore the teachers’ stories of the development of learning dispositions in kindergarten for one child, Ranu, tracking these through into her first 5 months of school. A main argument is that at school Ranu was indeed drawing on the dispositional competencies strengthened during Ranu’s early childhood experience, and that they acted as a “transition tool” to support

Ranu to find her way in the new environment.

Tara McLaughlin, Karyn Aspden and Claire McLachlan explore findings from the Teaching Practices project which aims to develop a New Zealand based list of teaching practices that promote children's learning and social-emotional competence in early childhood settings. This article focuses on the area of relationships, providing a teacher-validated list of practices intended to "reflect the practices that are contextually, pedagogically, and culturally valued and salient" in New Zealand early childhood settings. The list is likely to have practical usage as a tool for professional development and for discussion and debate. This is a study specifically for New Zealanders,

but situated within global perspectives on the importance of relationships and how to evaluate intentional teaching practices around relationship building in various social groups and dyads.

Finally, Jenny Ritchie considers pathways towards peace centred *Te Whāriki*-based practice. She examines understandings from te ao Māori that point to emotional learning as being foundational to other learning—a welcome re-orientation from a traditional Western emphasis on largely cognitive outcomes. "In te ao Māori conceptualisation, it can be seen that aroha ki te tangata, and manaakitanga are foundational values, dictating empathy, concern and care as dispositions to be instilled in young children".

The subsequent examples of centre-based practice and accompanying research data are appealing and will be of considerable interest to practitioners who wish to strengthen children's emotional and social competence.

Linda Mitchell  
General Editor

## References

- Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te whāriki: He whāriki mātauranga mō ngā mokopuna o Aotearoa—Early childhood curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.
- Ministry of Education. (2007). *The New Zealand curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media.

## Special Issue Call for Papers

### *Culturally responsive pedagogy in early childhood settings*

Editor Linda Mitchell and Guest Editor Amanda Bateman

*Early Childhood Folio* is seeking articles for a special issue related to teaching and learning in culturally diverse early childhood settings.

Recent research has highlighted challenges for refugees and immigrants in accessing early childhood services that are responsive to their cultural and linguistic identities and to the contexts of their lives. However there are few published studies about how pedagogy can address such challenges or of policy framing needed in support. Articles should follow the guidelines for writers for *Early Childhood Folio* and be submitted for this special issue by 15 January 2016.



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