Journeys with *Te Whāriki* 1990-2016
A personal story with kindergarten exemplars

Helen May
Professor of Education University of Otago

Whānau Manaaki Kindergartens’ conference
12 July 2016
Interrogating the past
Influencing our future

Two current projects

Book:
Growing a Kindergarten Movement – its peoples, purposes and politics
(publication 2017)

Website:
NZ Kindergarten Heritage Collection
(launch Sept 2016)

Working with Kerry Bethell
‘Kindergarten arguably is as ‘New Zealand’ as ‘kiwi fruit’ ‘pavlova’ and busy-bee’

What is kindergarten in the culture and politics of Aotearoa – NZ in the 21st century?

Helen May
Professor of Education University of Otago

7th International Froebel Society conference
Evangelisches Fröbelseminar, Kassel, Germany
23-25 June 2016
Outline

• The landscape of ECE in NZ
• Levelling of the kindergarten flagship
• Enduring Froebelian metaphors: Dunedin Jubilee
• Rebuilding kindergarten: Christchurch celebrations
• Rethinking kindergarten: Wellington expansions
• Rebranding kindergarten: Auckland enterprise
• **Bronwyn Coulton**: Maintaining the integrity of Froebel in the cultural context of Aotearoa/New Zealand

• **Eileen Kennedy**: Poetry in Motion: Cultural influences on poetry from Froebel’s time to the contemporary settings of New Zealand Kindergartens

• **Dr. Kerry Bethell**: “What value a Froebel certificate?” Infant school teachers’ agency and identity, 1890-1930
Aftermath of 1848 revolution in Prussia
1851-1860: Kindergarten verbot - closes all 49 Kindergartens
1855: Mm Bertha Ronge’s Kindergarten London

*The Lady’s Newspaper* 13 October 1855
1920s-30s
Kindergarten
‘A Lot to Learn’

Film produced by the NZ Free Kindergarten Union c. early 1960s. The film is set in Auckland. The first section shows the training of kindergarten teachers at the Arney Rd house. The second section of the film is set in the Constance Colegrove Kindergarten in Remuera and follows a young kindergarten trainee on a teaching practice.

The original film is held in Archives NZ Wellington
Kindergarten 1970s-80s
GOVERNMENT INTEREST IN THE ‘PLAYS OF CHILDHOOD’
Educational and political context for national curriculum development from 1990s

- Global agendas - linking education and economic success
- Addressing educational failure of some children
- Education administration reform 1989->
- Curriculum reform 1990->
- Increasing government investment in early childhood education
- 1991 Educational Achievement Initiative
- NZ Curriculum framework 1991
Beginning premises of an EC curriculum - 1992

• **Early childhood**
  • Valuing diversity
  • Birth to five years
  • Including home-based programmes
  • Inclusive of children with special needs
  • Articulating differences and links to school curriculum
  • Parents and family an integral part of early childhood programmes

• **New Zealand society**
  • Bicultural
  • Country of migrants
  • Connections to the Pacific
  • Valuing the natural environment
MANY POSSIBLE PATTERNS OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
Levelling the ECE landscape: 1

Prior to the 1980s
• 2 preschool services:
  – Playcentre (with parents)
  – Kindergarten (with teachers)
• Both regulated and provided with funding support by the Department of Education.
• Kindergartens regarded as the **flagship** service with buildings, teacher salaries and operations funded by government.

After the 1980s
• Childcare shifted to Department of Education
• Integrated childcare and kindergarten teaching qualifications
• 1989 *Before Five* policies
  – Equitable funding per child
  – Unified regulatory structures
• Growth of Nga Kohanga Reo, Pacifica and home based programmes
• Growth of private provision
• Kindergartens lose flagship status
Levelling the ECE landscape: 2

1. 1990s: Attempts by government to reduce kindergarten privileges ‘sinking the flagship’

2. 2002-2012: Strategic Plan phase-in of 100% qualified teachers across other ECE services (salary subsidies)

3. 2007: Introduction of 20 hours free ECE for 3-4 years olds phased in across all ECE services

What were once flagship kindergarten policies were being made available to all children and services
Levelling the ECE Landscape: 3
1990s ➔: Te Whāriki
A curriculum “mat for all to stand on”

Mana Atua          Well-being
Mana Whenua        Belonging
Mana Tangata       Contribution
Mana Reo           Communication
Mana Aoturoa       Exploration

Principle of empowerment

_Toku Rangatiratanga na te mana-matauranga_
‘knowledge and power set me free’  Tilly Reedy, Ngati Porou, 1993
Lee Blackie was a kindergarten teacher from Dunedin at the conference:

‘We began to play with it, plan with it and use the language. We went back and put the new words of Te Whāriki on the walls of our kindergarten linked by coloured strings to photos of our kindergarten activities.’ (Senior Teacher DKA, Interview 2013)
Enduring Metaphors of Froebelian pedagogy: a Dunedin case study

1. Constructing a new world: wooden blocks and buildings
2. Planting the seeds of the new child: Sustainable gardens, cooking
3. Expressing cultural identity: songs, games and movement
4. Handling the tools of technology: occupations and crafts
1. Constructing a new world: wooden blocks and buildings
2. Planting the seeds of the new child
3. Expressing cultural identity: Songs, games and movement
4. Handling the tools of technology: Occupations and crafts
The broader context of implementing *Te Whāriki*

Weaving the policy
Weaving the pedagogy
Weaving the research
Weaving the practice
# Development and ongoing implementation of Te Whāriki

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Event Description</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991-1992</td>
<td>Curriculum development</td>
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<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>Draft of ‘Te Whāriki’ sent to centres and trialled</td>
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<td>1994-</td>
<td>Professional development for teachers.</td>
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<td>1994-</td>
<td>Incorporation in teacher education qualifications</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>‘Te Whāriki’ launched by the Prime Minister</td>
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<td>1996-ongoing</td>
<td>Education Review Office <em>National Reports</em></td>
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<td>1996-2001</td>
<td>Assessment and evaluation research: ‘Learning and teaching stories’</td>
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<td>1998</td>
<td><em>A Quality Journey</em> for planning and evaluation</td>
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<td>2000-3</td>
<td>‘Te Whāriki video series launched</td>
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<td>2001-</td>
<td>Assessment Exemplars Project</td>
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<td>2002-2010</td>
<td>Phasing in for 100% of staff to be qualified teachers</td>
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<td>2002</td>
<td>Pay Parity for kindergarten and school teachers</td>
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<td>2002-2012</td>
<td><em>Pathways to the Future</em>. 10 year strategic Plan for ECE</td>
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<td>2002-2012</td>
<td>Recommendation for an early school years curriculum (TW and NZC) 2003-9 100%</td>
<td>Recommendation for an early school years curriculum (TW and NZC) 2003-9 100% qualification target and funding cut to 80%</td>
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<td>2003-9</td>
<td>‘Centres of Innovation’ research partnerships with teachers</td>
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<td>2004-9</td>
<td>‘Kei Tua o te Pae - Assessment for Learning’ launched</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Quality funding linked to the qualifications of staff and levels of pay</td>
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<td>2005</td>
<td>Pay parity phase-in for teachers in childcare centres (incomplete)</td>
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<td>2007-</td>
<td>20 hours ‘Free ECE’ for 3 and 4 year olds</td>
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<td>2009</td>
<td>Policy focus on participation of ‘vulnerable children’</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td>Budget cuts, 100% qualification target and funding cut to 80%</td>
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<td>2010</td>
<td><em>Te Whatu Pokeka</em> – Kaupapa Māori assessment for learning</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>ECE taskforce report <em>An Amazing Agenda for Children</em> (2011)</td>
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<td>2011</td>
<td>Recommendation to review the implementation of <em>Te Whāriki</em></td>
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<td>2012-2014</td>
<td><em>ECE Outcomes</em> project</td>
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<td>2015</td>
<td>AG on the Continuity of Learning: Strengthening the Implementation of <em>Te Whāriki</em></td>
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Shifting policy approaches to ECE 1999-2013

Labour 1999-2008
Investment in inputs
*Language of rights*

National 2008 ->
Accounting for outputs
*Language of risk and vulnerability*
Two Ministers of Finance and contrasting views of the role of the state in relation to young children

2004: Labour-led centre-left

Minister’s of Education, Health and Social Development ‘holding the baby’ launching the Action Plan to Support Vulnerable Children, 22 Aug 2012

2012: National-led centre-right
‘Early childhood education is no longer seen as a public good but as a vehicle for risk minimisation for government, now and in the future…The language of *Te Whāriki* is not one of risk, vulnerability and competition. It speaks, instead of opportunity, respect and relationships’

Ministry of Education project and resource development for learning story framework led by Margaret Carr 2004-2009

Noticing
Recognising
Responding
Revisiting

20 books
Adopts the concept of Whakapapa as a fundamental form of knowing within Māori culture

- Mōhiotanga: Knowings
- Mātauranga: Learnings
- Māramatanga: Understandings

Ministry of Education funded research linking teachers and researchers in joint investigations particularly relating to classroom/centre settings. Covers all sector groups and inclusive of groundbreaking early years research around Te Whāriki. Just three examples:

- J. Ritchie and C. Rau (2008) *Te Puawaitanga: Partnerships with Tamariki and Whanau in Bicultural Early Childhood Care and Education*
- C. Dalli et al (2011) *What’s Special about Teaching and Learning in the First Years?*
- Keryn Davis and Sally Peters (2011) *Moments of Wonder, Everyday Events: Children’s Working Theories in Action*
CENTRES OF INNOVATION PROJECT 2003-10
LED BY ANNE MEADE
Working with Te Whāriki (2013)
http://www.ero.govt.nz/National-Reports/Working-with-Te-Whariki-

- 80% of 627 centres reviewed in 2012 were making use of prescribed framework of Principles and Strands for planning and practice. Variable understandings

- 10% of services working in some depth including self review

- 10% limited use, ie. Might be visible in wall displays or in philosophical statements but not evident in practice
Te Whāriki as I see it, is a tapestry for life. It is a Māori tapestry for life available to anyone and everyone ..... The real strength of Te Whāriki is its capacity to establish strong and durable foundations for every culture in Aotearoa New Zealand, and in the world ... Te Whāriki rests on the theory that all children will succeed in education when the foundations to their learning is based on an understanding and a respect for their cultural roots.

Sir Tamati and Lady Tilly (Ngati Porou) OECD conference, Te Whāriki in an international perspective, Wellington 2013
Some early years settings are less effective than others
Re-engagement with Te Whāriki is needed
Local and cultural knowledge are crucial to implementing Te Whāriki
The workforce is not fully qualified
An uneven qualifications base risks undermining investment
Transition to school can threaten continuity of learning.
Summary issues – challenges - directions

- Ongoing Investment in the infrastructure of quality for all children is necessary. It does not guarantee in-depth implementation of curriculum – but it is more likely
- Ongoing professional development and resources needed for all staff – not just in struggling centres
- Increased focus on professional leadership
- Redressing the damage of shortsighted funding cuts
- A renewed plan for implementing and ‘refreshing’ TW over the next decade including an early school years curriculum
- Caution concerning policy demands for the evidence of learning and evidence of implementation of curriculum – ie OECD PISA for preschoolers in preparation
No mention of ‘children’s rights’ ‘social justice’ ‘democracy’ or ‘play’
In a 174 page report ‘assessment’ is cited 117 times.

‘Preschool PISA’ – OECD ‘International Early Learning Study’ a cross national assessment of learning outcomes involving the testing of 5 year olds in participating countries – possibly including NZ