Institute for Early Childhood Studies

Creating a rich curriculum through intentional teaching

Workshop presented at the IECS Spring Research Seminar, 14th October 2017

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“Te Whāriki interprets the notion of curriculum broadly, taking it to include \textit{all the experiences, activities and events, both direct and indirect, that occur within the ECE setting}. It provides a framework of principles, strands, goals and learning outcomes …. provides a basis for each setting \textit{to weave a local curriculum} that reflects its own distinctive character and values.”

(Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 7)
What do you value in your setting?
The Early Childhood “Dichotomies”

Play vs. Teaching
Child-Initiated vs. Teacher-Directed
Unstructured vs. Structured
Holistic vs. Domain Specific

Why does it have to be one or the other?
Why not both?
Play is highly valued in ECE  
*(Play = learning)*

- **Vygotsky suggested:**
  - Play is the leading source of learning and development in the preschool years
  - Play creates the zone(s) of proximal development

- Play can support freedom, choice, control, mastery, agency, imagination, creativity connection, belonging, engagement in social and cultural practices, and exploration of self and others.

- Play can be fun, relaxing, exciting, promote physical and emotional well-being, have a purpose or have no purpose.

- Play is so important it recognized as a right for every child (United Nations).
Teaching is often undervalued in ECE

(\textit{Teaching} = \textit{didactic practice})

In New Zealand ECE, we often hear

- Children lead their own learning
- I consider myself a facilitator
- Children learn through self-directed play
- I would never interfere with a child’s learning
- Learning is guided entirely by the children’s interests
- It’s my job to set up the environment and let children engage on their own terms

There is a reluctance to acknowledge the importance of the teacher and the teaching that occurs.
Figure 7.1: A Model of Teacher Thinking and Reflection within a Community of Practice

Cherrington (2011, 2016)
A Variety of Reasons

Historical/political reasons:

- Education and care viewed as care (baby-sitting)
- An extension of the mother’s role or “women’s work” – historically devalued and underpaid
- Expectations for professional qualifications for ECE teachers shifting in the political winds

Establish a contrast between school & ECE

Nature of Te Whāriki & Implementation Issues
Establish a contrast between “school-age teaching” and “early childhood teaching”.

- “school-age teaching” viewed as more didactic and focused on discrete content areas.

- “early childhood teaching” should be relational, play-based or routines-based and rich in a variety of integrated experiences in natural and authentic contexts for young children.
Nature of Te Whāriki & Implementation Issues

- The broad nature of the framework of principles and strands and how this accommodates a wide range of practice, including poor quality practice

- No clear standards of practice for implementation of Te Whāriki

- The historical focus on learning and silence about teaching within the document

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use of the word</th>
<th>1996</th>
<th>2016 Draft</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>More than 150 times</td>
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</table>
“teaching should be considered a legitimate aspect of early childhood professional practice”
(Siraj-Blatchford, 2009, p.155).
The time has come …

“Kaiako are the key resource in any ECE service. Their primary responsibility is to facilitate children’s learning and development through thoughtful and intentional pedagogy.”

(Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 59)
Kaiako responsibilities:

- 15 areas of practice that include both *pedagogical interactions* and *pedagogical framing* (Siraj-Blatchford et al, 2002)
With kaiako as the key resource…

“Kaiako are the key resource in any ECE service. Their primary responsibility is to facilitate children’s learning and development through thoughtful and intentional pedagogy.”

(Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 59)

*What does intentional teaching mean to you and your team?*
Intentional Teaching

Broadly defined...

“to always be thinking about what we are doing and how it will foster children’s development and produce real and lasting learning”

(Epstein, 2007, p.10)

Research has shown that outstanding teachers are intentional, they do things on purpose. (Slavin, 2000)
Intentional Teaching

The teacher considers...

- What to Teach
- When to Teach
- How to Teach
- How to Evaluate
- Clearly defined learning objectives
- Play-, routine-, or activity-based
- Pedagogical approaches & strategies
- Continually assess progress and adjust
- Content
- Context
- Technique
  (method, course of action)
- Assessment

Child-Guided Experience + Adult-Guided Experience + Peer-Mediated Experience = Optimal Learning

Slide from: Embedded Instruction for Early Learning Project; Snyder et al, 2017. [www.embeddedinstruction.net](http://www.embeddedinstruction.net)
Each child’s equation is different...

- Child-Initiated
- Adult-Guided
- Peer-Mediated

- Child-Initiated
- Adult
- Peer-Mediated

- Child-Initiated
- Adult-Guided
- Peer

Optimal Learning

Slide from: Embedded Instruction for Early Learning Project; Snyder et al, 2017. www.embeddedinstruction.net
Getting Clarity on Teaching, Learning & Play

- Play and everyday activities, transitions, and routines can be the medium for teaching and learning.

- Children interests and play are the starting point for teaching and learning (not the end point).

- Children learn best when supported by a knowledgeable other in context of meaningful activities.

- Intentional teaching might involve:
  - Doing nothing
  - Doing something
    - Creating environments and opportunities
    - Following a child’s lead
    - Directing a child’s lead
    - Supporting a child through “instruction”
    - Doing different things for different children

The key is being intentional! Thoughtful, planful, purposeful
Intentional Teaching in Play

Figure 1: Integrated teaching and learning approaches (VEYDLF, p 12)

Locally developed **RICH** curriculum

“*Te Whāriki* interprets the notion of curriculum broadly, taking it to include all the experiences, activities and events, both direct and indirect, that occur within the ECE setting. It **provides a framework of principles, strands, goals and learning outcomes** …. provides a basis for each setting to weave a local curriculum that reflects its own distinctive character and values.”

(Ministry of Education, 2017, p. 7)
## Revised outcomes within strands

### Breadth & depth of curriculum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Well-Being</th>
<th>Belonging</th>
<th>Contribution</th>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Keeping themselves healthy and caring for themselves</td>
<td>Making connections between people, places and things</td>
<td>Treating others fairly and including them in play</td>
<td>Using gesture and movement to express themselves</td>
<td>Playing, imagining, inventing and experimenting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing themselves and expressing their feelings and needs</td>
<td>Taking part in caring for this place</td>
<td>Recognising and appreciating their own ability to learn</td>
<td>Understanding oral language and using it for a range of purposes</td>
<td>Moving confidently and challenging themselves physically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping themselves and others safe from harm</td>
<td>Understanding how things work here and adapting to change</td>
<td>Using a range of strategies and skills to play and learn with others</td>
<td>Recognising [and using] mathematical symbols and concepts</td>
<td>Using a range of strategies for reasoning and problem solving</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Showing respect for kaupapa, rules and the rights of others</td>
<td></td>
<td>Expressing their feelings and ideas using a wide range of materials and modes</td>
<td>Making sense of their worlds by generating and refining working theories</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Enjoying hearing stories and retelling and creating them</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Recognising [and using] print symbols and concepts</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Intentionally broadening and deepening curriculum:

- Choose a child from your centre/service who you are unsure of the extent to which s/he is experiencing a broad, deep curriculum in your centre/service.

- Think about this child
  - What you know and don’t know about this child
  - What information do you need and how might you gather this?
  - Think across the curriculum – are there strands, goals or learning outcomes that are harder for you to think about in relation to that child?
  - How can you intentionally build upon what you know about this child to broaden / deepen his/her curriculum experiences?
    - What to teach?
    - When to teach?
    - How to teach?
Intentional teaching: *all* children experiencing a rich curriculum

- To what extent is every child in your centre/service experiencing a curriculum that will support the aspiration of *Te Whāriki* for children to grow up as:

  “competent and confident learners and communicators, healthy in mind, body, and spirit, secure in their sense of belonging and in the knowledge that they make a valued contribution to society” (2017, p.5)?

- What strategies might you use within your team to ensure that every child experiences a curriculum that is rich enough to support this aspiration?
Learning in the Early Years Matters!

High-quality ECE lays the foundation for all future learning, behavior, & health.
## Selected Education Review Office Early Childhood Reports (2007-2014)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Report</th>
<th>Focus</th>
<th>Level of Practice within ECE Sector</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>High Quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>Positive Foundations</td>
<td>Effective use of social &amp; emotional support practices</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013&lt;sub&gt;b&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>Priorities for Learning</td>
<td>Implementation of curriculum reflective of priorities for children’s learning</td>
<td>17%</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Infants &amp; Toddlers:</td>
<td>Curriculum responsiveness to promote positive outcomes for infants &amp; toddlers</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013&lt;sub&gt;a&lt;/sub&gt;</td>
<td>Working with Te Whāriki</td>
<td>Effective use of Te Whāriki framework of principles and strands</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Wrap up: 3-2-1

- 3 key ideas from today
- 2 points to ponder
- 1 thing you will do in follow-up to today
Presentation References


Useful Resources/References


