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He Kitenga Korowai: Honouring te reo Māori

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In 2016 Te Reo Māori: He taonga mō ā tātou Mokopuna was published and released into the early childhood education (ECE) sector.

To support the release of the book into the ECE sector the Raranga Reo research project was set up by NZTC to evaluate the use of the He Taonga book by teachers in the early childhood sector. A prototype teaching guide to assist teachers' use of He Taonga was key to the research. The teaching guide was developed alongside a dissemination process and trialled. The dissemination process was a multifaceted approach consisting of briefing meetings and a professional development (PD) session. The briefing meetings were held with key people of ECE centres and a PD session was held for teacher participants. Using a formative evaluation research framework, the Raranga Reo research project collected data to assess the effectiveness of He Taonga with particular reference to the prototype teaching guide. This paper discusses the outcomes of the research project.

Introduction

Fourteen years after the implementation of New Zealand's first bicultural curriculum in early childhood - *Te Whāriki, He Whāriki Mātauranga mo ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa Early Childhood Curriculum,*[1] the Education Review Office [ERO] found in 2010 that few early childhood centres acknowledged Māori language and culture through their practices. The findings of ERO was supported by a Waitangi Tribunal report (2010) released in the same year, that stated the decline in the use of te reo Māori was attributable to factors such as quality and supply of competent teachers not matching the demand; and lack of educational resources needed to teach te reo Māori. The lack of te reo Māori resources was also noted in student evaluations by lecturers in the te ao Māori courses at New Zealand Tertiary College [NZTC]. The feedback from students in particular (see Rokx, 2016) became the impetus for the development of a te reo Māori resource in 2015. In 2016 *Te Reo Māori: He taonga mō ā tātou Mokopuna* [*He Taonga*] was published and released into the early childhood education (ECE) sector. *He Taonga* emulated the mission and values of NZTC in *…nurturing and education of children…to see the difference…in the lives of young children, families and communities; and …celebrate diversity in people and their skills, talents, gifts, abilities, knowledge and culture…* This is evident in the aims of *He Taonga to support teachers in their journey towards learning and regularly using te reo Māori* (Rokx, 2016, p. 6).

The Raranga Reo research project was set up by NZTC to evaluate the use of the *He Taonga* book by teachers in the early childhood sector. A prototype teaching guide to assist teachers' use of *He Taonga* was key to the research. The

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[1] Te Whāriki is the Ministry of Education's early childhood curriculum policy statement. It is a framework for providing tamariki (children's) early learning and development within a sociocultural context. It emphasises the learning partnership between kaiako (teachers), parents, and whānau/families. Kaiako (teachers) weave a holistic curriculum in response to tamariki (children's) learning and development in the early childhood setting and the wider context of the child's world.

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teaching guide was developed alongside a dissemination process and trialled. The dissemination process was a multifaceted approach consisting of briefing meetings and a professional development (PD) session. The briefing meetings were held with key people of ECE centres and a PD session was held for teacher participants. Using a formative evaluation research framework, the Raranga Reo research project collected data to assess the effectiveness of *He Taonga* with particular reference to the prototype teaching guide.

Design and Methods
Setting and research participants

Purposeful sampling was used to identify 12 ECE centres in Auckland from a NZTC database of ECE centres in Auckland. The centres represented a cross section of large and small centres, philosophies, age groups and geographical spread. All centres were licensed and under a standard ERO[2] review plan. The identification of the centres first through purposeful sampling, facilitated the voluntary participation of teacher participants and key people in the study. Purposeful sampling is a valid method for the collection of data from participants in organisations involved in the implementation process, because they have the knowledge, expertise and experience with the topic of interest (Palinkas, Horwitz, Green, Wisdom, Duan and Hoagwood, 2013; Mutch 2005, 2013). Crucial to the study were the 12 teacher participants from the 12 ECE centres. The teacher participants were qualified and certificated[3] teachers and their reflections on the utility of the two resources and PD session were key to the study's purpose. Secondary participants[4] for the study were 18 key people[5] from/associated with ECE centres. These participants were asked general questions in regards to decisions made to the purchase and dissemination of resources used in their centres.

Ethics and ethical considerations

The ethics application was approved through NZTC Research Ethics Committee. Centre managers or researchers distributed participant information sheets and consent forms through the participating centres. Children's consent in the observation part of the study was obtained from their parents by the participating centre. As the research was undertaken under the auspices of NZTC[6] three ethical issues had to be considered. Firstly, the probability that researchers in the team[7] would know some of the staff in participating centres in the study was highly likely. Allocating researchers, centres that were not known to them beforehand, mitigated this. Secondly, the editor of *He Taonga* was a researcher on the project team. This was mitigated by exclusion of this researcher from the data collection phase. However, the researcher assisted with the analysis of the data collected from key people participants. The principal

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[2] The Education Review Office (ERO) is the New Zealand government department that evaluates and reports on the education and care of students in schools and early childhood services.

[3] Education Council of New Zealand.

[4] A secondary participant is someone who was not initially designated as a primary participant in a study.
Secondary participants are created when individuals provide information about other people whom they know or to whom they are related. Because secondary participants were not initially recruited for the study, they have not given consent. Secondary participants are routinely created when social scientists and educators ask questions about the behaviour and beliefs of participants' family members and associates.

[5] While there were 18 CMPKs they were not interviewed separately. Six respondents in this group participated alongside centre manager's interviews or in a group interview. Their data is reported under pseudonyms to protect the anonymity of the company or centre.

[6] NZTC is a private training establishment that specialises in early childhood teacher education.

[7] Three of the researchers are lecturers at NZTC. Part of their role is to visit ECE centres to check the progress of student teachers during their practicums.

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investigator then crosschecked the data during the write up phase of the project. Lastly, although three members of the research team wrote the teaching guide no mention of their names were noted in the guide.

Methodology

The study used a formative evaluation research framework to gain insights into the use of resources. Formative evaluation is a useful process designed to identify factors that influence the effectiveness of implementation of models. In the development phase of products, the collection of empirical data is essential to informing revision decisions to improve models or processes (see Onwuegbuzie & Daniel, 2003; Stetler et al., 2006; Plomp, & Nieveen 2013; Trochim, 2006).

Kaupapa Māori research protocols[8] of aroha ki te tangata (respect for people); kanohi kitea (face to face); titiro, whakarongo and kōrero (look, listen, speak); manaaki ki te tangata (share and host people); kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people); alongside the values of NZTC[9] of te mata (vision); ngākau and manawa (heart) ; poutama (competence) and wairua (spirit) guided the interactions between the research team with each other and the participants in the study.

Methods

Poutama with its emphasis on competence and commitment to excellence reinforced the practice of manaaki ki te tangata. The practice of manaaki ki te tangata recognises that the relationship between researcher and participant is reciprocal and collaborative and that both parties bring knowledge and expertise to the research relationship (Smith, 1999; Pipi et al., 2004). In practice, poutama and manaaki ki te tangata informed the study's selection of ECE centres, design of the teaching guide and the methods utilised in the study.

The data collection methods of the study were briefing meetings, a PD session, observations and one-to-one interviews. Aroha ki te tangata - respect for people (Smith, 1999) informed negotiations for time and space for the briefing meeting, PD session, observation and one-to-one interviews.

The intent of the briefing meetings held with key people was to inform them of the Raranga Reo study and to get their support for it; and gift a copy of *He Taonga* to their centre. It was originally intended that interviews with key people would be held at a later date after the briefing meeting. The interview would discuss how resources were purchased, disseminated and used in their centres. However, at the request of some of the key people participants, researchers were able to carry out the interview at the conclusion of the briefing meeting. The practice of kanohi kitea acknowledges the importance of face-to-face meetings (Smith, 1999) with participants in building trust and relationships (Pipi et al., 2004). Kanohi ki te kanohi is a critical process because it allows potential participants to appraise whether they will participate or not in the research. Ngākau reinforces the importance of trusting relationships (Cram and Pipi cited in Pipi et al., 2004).

Prior to the observations and one-to-one interviews with teacher participants, a PD session was held at the NZTC campus in Auckland. The PD session was designed to enhance teacher participants' competencies in the utility of *He Taonga* and the teaching guide. The PD session consisted of building competency in the pronunciation of Māori words

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[8] See Smith, 1999.
[9] See NZTC website.

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and creative use of activities to teach children te reo Māori. Ten of the 12 teacher participants[10] attended the PD session. A small number of key people also attended in support of their teachers. Following the PD session, observations and one to one interviews were held with teacher participants at a later date.

The observations at the centres consisted of researchers observing the teacher participants using *He Taonga* supported by the teaching guide[11] with the children. Only a small number of teacher participants physically used *He Taonga* during their teaching session with the children. The majority opted to use elements from both resources during their teaching session with children. The researcher took notes during the observation. Following the half hour observation, a one to one interview with the teacher participant took place at the centre. Titiro, whakarongo and kōrero guided the observations and the face to face interview. Titiro, whakarongo and kōrero recognises the importance of looking, and listening in order to understand (Smith, 1999). It is a process where the researcher's role is *to see the stories unfold, to hear the voices* and understand the meaning and then *to speak, to affirm, to support, to validate, to question, to challenge, and to clarify* (Pipi et al., 2004, p.147). To maintain kōrero within the interviews, without interrupting the flow of the discussion, researchers used semi-structured questions. This allowed teacher participants to freely kōrero with purpose. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed by the researcher who carried out the interview.

Data analysis

The interview data from the teacher participants was transcribed, compiled and then colour-coded under the research questions. The notes from the key people participants were compiled and coded under the research questions, and later colour-coded. The notes from the observations were compiled and colour-coded.[12] The three sets of colour-coded data were assigned to researchers[13] for analysis. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. This method of analysis helped identify patterns within the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The patterns were noted by the researchers and discussed at project meetings. Further refinement of the analysis occurred at a project meeting. Participant's data were also assigned a code name. Data was also cross-checked during the write-up phase.

Findings
Dissemination

Effective utilisation strategies are critical components for the success of program or product development and usability. For this to occur a conscious effort must be made to spread new knowledge, policies, and practices to target, audiences or the public at large. Getting the product out is the easy part, getting it used the challenge (Westbrook & Boethel 1997, cited in National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities, 2009; Green, Ottoson, García, Hiatt & Roditis, 2014).

To improve the usability of the resource the dissemination process included briefing meetings with key people; a PD session for teacher participants; and a teaching guide to support use of *He Taonga* in the centres. These mediums were intended to spread knowledge of *He Taonga* and encourage its use in the ECE sector.

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[10] Although two teacher participants did not attend the PD session the observation and interview still took place. The research questions were adapted to suit the circumstance.

[11] The teacher participant used the book during the session with children.

[12] See Creswell for use of colour coding.

[13] Researchers worked in groups of two.

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The prototype teaching guide was developed by members of the research team to support the utility of *He Taonga*. The teaching guide expanded on the various sections of *He Taonga* by providing practical examples and ideas that teachers could use in their teaching. Feedback on the usability of the teaching guide from teacher participants would inform the refinement of it, prior to wider distribution. A PD session was held for teacher participants in the study to show them how to use *He Taonga* and the teaching guide. The PD session also gave them an opportunity to hear the pronunciation of Māori words from the editor of *He Taonga*. These support structures were intended to boost confidence and encourage use. This approach did not go unnoticed as one teacher participant commented:

> T5: *this PD session was very important I felt as it showed NZTCs commitment to the resource and they went out to support it and not just mail it through … you came out and offered PD and put out a learning guide to help teachers … this showed commitment to me …and building relationships…*

Three aspects to improve usability of resources are (1) increase the distribution reach of the resource (2) motivate people's use and application of the resource (3) and improve their ability to use and apply the resource (McCormack et al, 2013). These aspects are useful in guiding the findings discussions*.*

Briefing meetings: Increasing the distribution reach of the resource

The briefing meetings were based on the suggestion by the National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities [NCDDR] that the fundamental purpose of disseminating products is to ensure that it is fit for purpose (2009). Responses from key people indicate the merits of this approach in ensuring the resources developed would be disseminated and used through the various centres as noted in the following comments:

> (H) *it would fit in well and support the work*… [we have a large number of centres] *under* [our] *umbrella…while we can tell them about resources often the decision lies with each centre* [but] *we can also endorse resources that we think will help… if the book had been mailed out to the centres the manager would have just looked at it and left it on the shelf. No one will use it because no one will see it.*
>
> (J) *if you had posted me the book I would have simply put the book out there and it would have been up to the teachers to use it… it would most probably end up sitting on the shelf* [unused or gathering dust].

The personable approach gave researchers an opportunity to discuss the merits of *He Taonga* and to gift a copy to key people. Moreover, it allowed key people an opportunity to provide their initial thoughts on *He Taonga*. Visual appeal not only draws potential readers to the literature, but also influences their attitude and engagement with the content (Odell, Katz, and Hacker, 2006). Responses were overwhelmingly positive reflected in the following comments on the aesthetics and accessibility of *He Taonga*:

> (C) *very well presented and it looks great*
> (F) *I love the spiral bound because it makes it easy to lay flat… it's not over stimulating, very nice and professional*
> (M) *oh wow it's beautiful*
> (L) *it's a nice balance between text and pictures*
> (M) *wow this is amazing and so easy to understand… its user friend and visually appealing*
> (B) *it's all there and easy to access*

The appropriateness and relevance of *He Taonga* to the ECE sector did not go unnoticed:

> (H) *we have an online te reo resource but it's not specific to ECE*
> (E) *it looks very relevant to the ECE context because it has everything in one place… the book has everything*

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(F) *it is a great overview of language that can be used in an ECE centre*

Responses from the key people participants noted the potential of *He Taonga* to expand the use of te reo Māori in their ECE centres (Gordon-Burns and Campbell, 2014), from directives and nursery-rhyme mat songs:

(L) *using te reo in our reporting documentation, learning stories, planning, and newsletters*
(C) *the resource will fit into what we have here and hopefully allow for consistency and more than an add on*
(M) *the whole book is going to help me with ideas for adding more te reo in my planning;*
(G) *It challenges teachers to think of more things they can do*
(I) *often you will find that many people don't know the difference between mihi and pepeha, the book is good because it tells people what the difference is*
(L) *it's definitely going to help with how we document children's learning and communication*

The responses from key people were endorsed by the teacher participants who commented on the potential of *He Taonga* to expand the use of te reo Māori in their centres to support bicultural practices:

(T1) *the first thing that impressed me was how the sentence structure was explained…*
because whenever I tried to learn te reo Māori it was always to the songs…
(T2) *the chapters are written in a way that I understood as beginning a language you would want to learn from, from trying to learn another language, you know… learning about the culture, the food, greetings, numbers, colours…*
(T3) *it is prepared for the children, even if they can't read, little D… he can read… so he can go through it and, pick things up…*
(T4) *the words are easy and good to use and help me remember my training…*
(T5) *having this book and guide helps me validate the use of my grammar part which is most important to me…it gave me the confidence in sentence structure in terms of the present and the past…*
(T6) *the colours, I didn't know some of the colours and that helped…*
(T7) *we are sitting with the children and working with them and saying, like with a game to do with colours, that book has become invaluable as a prompt…*
(T8) *we used the book to help children learn about the body and the names…*

The importance of reading and writing in te reo Māori for children should not be underestimated as a mechanism for building appreciation and status of a language. Children learn the value of books through reading as it exposes them to new ideas, creative thinking and deeper understandings of who they are. While technological advances have introduced different forms for accessing literature like digital media, the use of books are still an important way for children to learn vocabulary (Skerrett-White, 2003). This was noted by participants in the Williams, Broadley and Te Aho (2012) study on bicultural competence in the early childhood sector. The participants found te reo Māori books were a good way of learning the language.

A powerful endorsement of the impact of *He Taonga* came from a teacher participant who felt on reading the resource it reaffirmed her sense of identity:

(T11) *I think the part I found most useful for myself was the mihi section because I have done my mihi before, but this time I was guided and encouraged via the book to understand why each part of my mihi is so significant to me. Actually, when I developed the mihi for the letter I sent out [to parents], it was the first time I actually cried when writing it because I now understand that my mihi defines me and it draws from my life and those*

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people and things that are part of my identity. It was very empowering to realise more about who I am and what I am about.

Field notes from the observation data, record the impact of T11's mihi in the centres weekly communication to parents. Parents were so moved by the mihi in te reo Māori and English that they wanted to learn more about Māori culture. A Māori whānau also asked T11 if she would honour them by wearing their whānau korowai (cloak) on the day of the centre's haka pōhiri. The parent's enthusiasm motivated T11 and centre staff to share their Māori resources via storypark with parents. This included recordings of the children saying their karakia, posted on storypark for whānau. In turn, this encouraged parents to use their child's karakia at home alongside their own cultural practices. Other teacher participants in the study commented on the appeal of *He Taonga* to the wider community. They encouraged the families of the children and other teachers to purchase a copy for their own personal use… *many of our families would love this book too, so its use will go beyond the immediate.*

The responses from participants in the study confirm Westbrook and Boethel's (1997) assertions that successful dissemination processes require *a careful match among a) the creation of products or knowledge, and the context of that creation, b) the target audiences, and c) the content, media, formats, and language used in getting the outcomes into the hands (and minds) of those target audiences.* The simple act of composing a mihi and using it within a communication to parents by T11 noted above, had a direct impact on motivating others to learn more about te reo Māori and tikanga Māori.

Professional development: Motivating teachers' use of resources

Although the responses from the participants show a positive attitude towards *He Taonga* they also recognised that lack of confidence in the pronunciation of kupu Māori (Māori words) would hinder efforts:

(G) *the biggest issue would be lack of confidence by teachers in pronunciation of words*

(M) *we also need to work on our confidence because some have had bad experiences which put them off using more Reo; yes, it is confidence in pronunciation but I think many of us have had negative experiences that have created blocks*

(T1) *even though we have brought some Māori teachers over here, but they are also not much familiar with [the phrases]*

(T5) *I would note that it seems to be us younger team members that are doing more and although our older team members try and try, I do feel that there's something still blocking them from pushing themselves more. For example, one of us has been in NZ all her life, and still she struggles with pronunciation, in contrast L is new and picks it up faster, tries to pronounce kupu properly, and asks if it sounds alright*

(T8) *I don't want to get it wrong* [pronunciation]*, like teaching the children*

The concerns in regards to pronunciation raised in the findings are not new and have been noted in reports and literature from the late nineties onwards[14]. In their recent study of the development of bicultural competency in early childhood education, Williams, Broadley, and Lawson-Te Aho also reported *the levels of discomfort experienced by early childhood educators in the application of te reo Māori* (2012, p.25). Despite the reservations in regards to pronunciation, teacher participants found that the PD session contributed in building their confidence and motivation:

(T12) *This was a very useful session and inspiring…it made the attendees feel motivated, I really liked the session, it made me feel that I could do it…*

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[14] see Education Review Office *Success for Māori in Early Childhood Services*, 2010; Ritchie, 1999; 2008.

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(T2) *I thought the PD was very good; everyone seemed very energized by it; everyone seemed very enthusiastic and I know around our table everyone was just dying to get going…*

(T1) *the PD, it gives me so much encouragement. How te reo Māori was being used…how they did some practice with the sentence structure. And by listening as well to the Māori speakers, that was like 'Oh my God' … if we can speak Māori like that! It was like very much giving motivation to you, to do Māori…Because it is so helpful to you hearing it…*

(T7) *I was quite surprised; on the way home I was saying to my head-teacher who came with me - 'How much information (because we were working with a lady from another centre- and she was very very beginner-) and just the amount of information that she picked up in that time, that was real accelerated learning type of situation…*

(T8) *The PD was great and it helped to know how teachers could use te reo. As it is a new language for most of us it is taking time to develop and we can keep learning…*

(T3) *I took Māori at school and I never quite understood it but the way that [facilitator] has taught us… she has taught teacher in a way that… Right, I think I get this now. And I can use it now…*

In particular, the teacher participants liked the interactive games that they could introduce to the children in their centres and to their staff:

(T9) *I think the activities that we did in the PD could really help as a team and staff activity so I am going to introduce some ideas in the staff meeting…*

(T2) *I thought that charades was brilliant. As I told you, I am a visual… and kinaesthetic learner: to actually do that, to do the charades. And I actually know, when I know more Māori, when I have been using it more in the room, the children and I, I am going to be using it. Because I think the children could easily do that…they would love it!*

(T7) *We loved it! It was so much fun! It was so interactive and loads of fun! And really informative…*

Professional development sessions for teachers that are context specific[15] can assist in encouraging teachers not fluent in the language to learn alongside the child (Mara & Burgess, 2007). *Te Whāriki* recognises the importance of children learning alongside their teachers, while MacNaughton and Williams (2008) recognise the merits of co-constructing learning and role-modelling as effective teaching strategies in supporting children's learning and development. This approach is supported by Buysse, Castro and Peisner-Feinberg (2009) who state that professional development focused on teaching strategies enhanced the teacher's language and literacy practices and was beneficial in developing children's phonological awareness. The only limitation to children's learning are the attitudes of adults. When adults are confident, a much more positive attitude is exhibited and transferred to children (Kohn, 1997).

Research on bicultural competence in the early childhood sector showed that teachers were also aware of the benefits of professional development. The participants in their study recommended resources and supportive professional development would enable the early childhood sector to become biculturally competent (Williams, Broadley & Te Aho 2012). The PD session acted to build confidence and motivation in participants who attended to use the teaching guide and *He Taonga*.

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[15] Mara and Burgess used videotaped episodes of literacy experiences from within the a'oga amata setting to facilitate discussion with teachers during professional development sessions. These sessions proved useful in shifting the way teachers taught to a more integrated approach of learning with the children in the centre.

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Teaching guide: Improve teachers' ability to use and apply *He Taonga*

In order to build confidence and motivate participants to utilise *He Taonga*, a teaching guide was developed and a PD session was held for the teacher participants. The PD session focused on showing them how to use the teaching guide to support their use of *He Taonga*. The teaching guide drew similar responses to *He Taonga* and the PD session from the teacher participants:

(T9) *I liked how I felt empowered by the guide because it did not dictate what I should do but rather encouraged me by giving a few examples and then ended with a provocation or invitation. This was very empowering to me because I still lack confidence, but I am willing to try… the guide offered more idea for us to build upon, and then challenged us to keep going…*

(T2) *I knew my colours. I knew the numbers, but I wanted ideas of how to introduce them to the children; I wanted a sentence I could use. it was more like a 'how use it' … For example, with the 'tell the time' section: it tells you the time, but then in the teaching guide it tells you how to play 'Mister Wolf', which is a great activity…*

(T1) *We have tried 'What's the time Mister Wolf?' Two or three times we have tried that. Teaching guide has really good basic. It has good ideas…*

(T5) *helps me think about other activities to do to support the learning …the teaching time idea came from that and learning around numbers… it was good as there was a clock in the book… it helps to make the exercise more meaningful and refers back to Te Whāriki making resources…*

(T3) *It is a nice guide; it is not too full on… like that it overloads the brain…like. God, where do I start? Like 'how am I going to use this'? Yeah I think it is just the right amount of information…*

The responses from the teacher participants show that factors such as accessibility of use and content of the guide were important in encouraging confidence and usability. While the apprehensions of the teacher participants noted above highlight recurring themes of lack of confidence these apprehensions were allayed when they attended the professional development session and read the resources. Lack of confidence was replaced with a sense of creative ownership reflected in the following comments:

(T1) *The teaching guide is actually helpful, it is supporting the main book, it explains how to use it with the children, like you will find that song 'What's the time Mister Wolf' and then it tells you in teaching guide: step by step how to do it with the child…*

(T3) *Yes the sentence structure I've just been able to understand it… it is going to be very easy for the other teachers to also pick up I could use the book quite easy on its own but if you wanted to do an extension on that then I would go back to the guide and I would go right and I am always finding new things as well so I can go back and I find it helped me extend on my te reo Māori, because I do find I am a bi-cultural teacher, but this was a total extension on what I already know …*

(T12) *I think the teaching guide is very useful and it is has some great activities that are also attached to the book…*

(T5) *Teaching guide goes hand in hand with the book and is useful… helps me think about other activities to do to support the learning …the teaching time idea came from that and learning around numbers…. It was around learning numbers and that the guide helped me and it was good as there was a clock in the book… it helps to make the exercise more meaningful and refers back to Te Whāriki making resources and children around using the language gives me the confidence to use the language…*

(T9) *I firstly used the 'he aha te wā matua wuruhi' (what's the time mr wolf) because it's already a game we play with the children. This just gave a new angle to present to our tamariki…*

(T8) *The book also suggests that we have cue cards to carry around and this is something we need to do as a team. That was in the teaching guide and that was helpful…*

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The range of observation data shows that the learning experiences suggested within the teaching guide and *He Taonga* were practical and fun. The children and the teacher participants were engaged in a range of experiences. Examples of observations included:

(T9) I *held up the chart and asked what it was, and the majority of the children recognised it as 'the emotions chart. The teacher participant went through the chart, in no particular order, pointing to the face displayed and asking he aha te kare ā roto? The children responded by saying he/she is pōuri (sad) or 'hari koa/ngenge…*

(T5)*'s activity supported the children to create a cardboard clock using a paper plate. As the children created their clocks* (T5) *supported them to use te reo Māori phrases for example 'I am building my clock in te reo Māori. In building their clocks the children also developed their knowledge of how to count from 1 - 12, shapes and colours with the teacher participant.*

(T7) *using a teddy bear, supported the children to develop their use of te reo Māori using the kupu for body parts and the children enjoyed singing songs about the parts of the body.*

(T3) *engaged the children in a game of 'he aha te wā Matua Wuruhi', the children had been playing the game with* (T3) *a few days before and although the* (T3) *started playing the game with the children they soon took over the role of the* (T3) *and she became more of an active observer*.

In their study of bicultural competency of early childhood practitioners Williams et al. (2012) report that all the participants in their study requested *more te reo Māori resources with hands-on resources not just theory of what to do but tools to do it* (p. 45). The sentiments of the participants in the Williams et al study (2012) was also echoed by key people and teacher participants who noted:

(A) *CDs are a good way to get accustomed to the pronunciation…*

(T9) *Provide an audio to go with each part of the book…*

(T6) *I use flash cards and I think that could be one way to have a PD session for teachers: to give practical things to do for their centres. Also maybe a section where we can advise centres where to get other resources …*

(T12) *Book two will be really cool, I would like some more phrases and some more extension, games for maths and literacy, all the basics are there, maybe just going deeper…maybe different sections for age groups would be helpful and we need some more help with how to show Māori culture and perhaps the environment. How do I make biculturalism visual?*

The request for further te reo Māori resources and professional development opportunities from participants in the study show a desire by the participants in the study to engage their centres in bicultural learning opportunities. Professional development opportunities are in place at NZTC to support associate teachers and students.

Discussion

Evident in the responses from key people and teacher participants in this study is that *Te Reo Māori: He taonga mō ā tātou Mokopuna* resource is a valuable and much needed resource for teaching of te reo Māori to children in the ECE sector. In drawing attention to the need for instructional materials for teaching of te reo Māori to children the study identified features of *He Taonga* that were particularly appealing to teacher participants. Three features of the physical structure of the book stand out. Firstly, the spiral binding of the book made it easy for teacher participants to lie the book flat during teaching periods. Being able to lie a book flat and open at the right page meant that they could teach an activity from the book and refer back to the page without the book closing. Secondly, the visual appeal of the book was pleasing to the eye and served a utilitarian purpose that teacher participants noted. The colour coding of the book in sections in the contents page made it easy for teacher participants to navigate to the corresponding colour sections

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in the teaching guide. The colour coded layout of the book starting with entry level Māori words to intermediate and then to advanced phrases and concepts in particular, worked well for teachers who are more versed in te reo Māori, allowing them to find relevant sections to use in their teaching with ease. Teachers also stated that the book was useful in explaining grammar and sentence structure; the difference between mihi and pepeha; and extending opportunities for them to engage children in learning beyond waiata and directives. For example, learning about the body. Thirdly, the teacher participants[16] felt the balance of texts and visuals in the book made the content less intimidating for them to engage with. This helped to ease their apprehensions and encouraged them to engage with the content. Likewise, the teaching guide drew similar responses from the teacher participants. Designed to improve teacher participant's ability to use and apply *He Taonga* the findings show that the teaching guide was an appreciated addition. The feedback from the teacher participants was used to refine the final guide for publishing. The teaching guide will assist early childhood teachers to develop creative resources to engage children and expand their vocabulary in te reo Māori. The findings suggest that the design and content of *He Tao*nga and teaching guide is an effective model for the design of instructional resources for the teaching of te reo Māori or other languages to children in ECE centres and the wider community.

Conclusion

This research project was set up to support the release of the *Te Reo Māori: He taonga mō ā tātou Mokopuna* into the ECE sector.

In respect of *Te Reo Māori: He taonga mō ā tātou Mokopuna* the design, structure and content of the book were overwhelmingly endorsed by the participants in the study. The book was seen as a relevant and much needed tool for teaching te reo Māori in the ECE sector. In support of *He Taonga* the project researchers developed a prototype teaching guide to accompany and support the utility of *He Taonga* in teaching young children. Data was collected to assess the effectiveness of the prototype teaching guide in work with young children. The findings show that the prototype teaching guide was effective in building the confidence and competency of teacher participants to engage with *Te Reo Māori: He taonga mō ā tātou Mokopuna* in their teaching practices. The research participants and the researchers identified areas where the prototype teaching guide could be strengthened.

Recommendations

The combined recommendations of the participants and the researchers were to enhance the content of the teaching guide to assist ECE teachers to:

*   Develop a mihimihi and pepeha specifically for their centre.
*   Develop activities that can help children to extend their skills in numeracy and literacy through te reo Māori.
*   Develop activities that build awareness of Waitangi Day and Matariki.

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[16] Only two teacher participants were Māori and familiar with the language.

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