



Editorial

**Music and Early Childhood Education - Mahara project -
Technology advantages and disadvantages - Teacher Child
attachment theory - Steiner Education - Issues and Trends**

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The contributors in this edition reflect once more the international character of He Kupu. Susan Young reports on music learning and teaching in Europe and the UK, Philippa Gerbic et al., report on the Mahara project in New Zealand, Karin du Plessis from Australia writes on child attachment theory and Sharla Snider and Sharon Hirschy from the USA discuss technology in the field of early childhood education. Paul White reports on his experience of Steiner education in the UK and finally Andrew Gibbons reports on issues and trends from a global perspective.

In the interview with Susan Young, she discusses music in early childhood education. The interview reveals much about the variety of activity that early childhood educators are engaging with in music in the early childhood centre and beyond. The danger of music as an activity seen as an adult-led activity alone is a subject that Susan has written about in a number of publications and in her interview she gives an outline of some of her misgivings about such a single-minded view of musical engagement. Susan goes on to discuss music and the very young, and her recent research work with seven year olds in: *My Place My Music*. She also reports on the work being undertaken with orchestral musicians in England and the Netherlands, and provides an insight into the challenging work of an intercultural music learning project being developed in family centres in the UK.

The Mahara project on e-learning for student teachers in early childhood is reported on by Philippa Gerbic, Anne Grey, Wendy Moore and Ross Bernay from the Auckland University of Technology. This project examined the experience of the teaching staff engaged in the development of an electronic portfolio project with third-year early childhood education students. The project demonstrated how the potential of a learning community can be developed by staff as they work alongside each other in a constructivist environment. As so often is the case, in new e-learning initiatives, the need for support in terms of helpdesk and lecturer support were outcomes, as was the need of students for a 'small steps' introduction to the software platform. The overall response of the staff indicated that the student potential for social interchange was enhanced between students and staff. The research method was particularly interesting in this project as each staff member researched their own response to the online learning environment.

Snider and Hirschy's study was also on the topic of technology but looks at the implementation of digital technology within an early childhood setting. As they point out, it is important for those working in the field of early childhood education to distinguish between activities that may be beneficial and those that may cause harm to the child. The paper looks at the implications of television overuse and points to evidence that apart from social isolation, watching television can also result in sleep deprivation and obesity. The use of MP3 players can result in hearing loss, and computer



and video games can even result in physical harm. Violence is often cited in connection with video games, and the authors identify video games as a factor in lowering self-esteem and the manifestation of physical aggression. The benefits pointed to in this report, such as, physical hand-eye coordination from computer use and a positive sense of self, are effects that result from joint teacher-child initiated activities. Television programmes that improve language development are also highlighted as worthwhile. In summarizing the potential learning arising from technology, four aspects of technology that should be considered: (i) provision of a wide variety of experiences, (ii) solution of authentic problems, (iii) ensure access is equal and supportive and (iv) thinking tools are included within the classroom contexts. Finally, the support for parents is advocated, and the impact of technology on thinking and learning is considered in the light of currently available computer tools.

Karin du Plessis provides a literature review on the subject of attachment theory in early childhood. This will be of use to those early childhood education students who may be researching this topic. Karin looks at Bowlby (1988) as a key text and reveals the complex interrelationship between a primary caregiver and the child. Her discussion of attachment theory is extended to the work of Overall et al., (2003) and Treboux, Crowell and Waters (2004) with respect to the response of the adult's capacity to distinguish between different types of attachment. Karin's study includes a review of the different models of caring in New Zealand and the implications for future learning.

The second interview is with Paul White, a lecturer in Steiner Education at the Auckland University Technology. This interview gives an outline of the origins of Steiner education and introduces some of the underlying principles of Steiner education. By referring to his own experience, Paul explains how Steiner education differs from mainstream teaching.

Andrew Gibbons revisits issues that are often raised in New Zealand and many other countries. The concern that parents are involved with the education of the young child and partnership itself is raised by Andrew, who sees difference as a possible means of celebrating this partnership. The issue of men working in early childhood is explored in the context of the 'man' as culturally situated. The issue of technology is explored in this issue and Andrew considers technology and its role within the centre and its implications for staff. Andrew also looks at physical restraint and working with children which Andrew sees in the space of the public and private arena. The regulation of early childhood education is an issue that is currently in the foreground in New Zealand and, as Andrew reflects, throws into relief many of the fundamental aspects of early childhood education.

This edition of He Kupu the first of the Volume 2 series indicates the new direction that the journal will be taking. While online learning and technology in early childhood education will remain a topic of interest, wider issues of early childhood curriculum theory and practice will be introduced into the discussion. The editors are keen to encourage those who have particular interests in the arts and early childhood education for the next issue. As indicated in the interview with Susan Young, changes are underway as a result of initiatives on a local level that can apply to a variety of settings. The editors are particularly interested in hearing from those involved in case studies involving the arts in early childhood education irrespective of their content of development or stage of development. In the meantime, work in any field relevant to early childhood is welcomed.



References

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