

Editorial

Children... the heart of curriculum

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This first issue of *He Kupu* for 2018 iterates the theme of the 2017 New Zealand Tertiary College (NZTC) symposium - *Children... the heart of curriculum*. In this edition a number of articles based on presentations from the symposium are featured. The articles reflect practical and theoretical perspectives of early childhood curriculum from practitioners, academics and postgraduate students.

A highlight of the 2017 NZTC symposium was a presentation by an international keynote speaker, Dr Sue Bredekamp, an early childhood education specialist from Washington, DC. In her presentation Bredekamp shared a number of key issues in regards to curriculum development, intentional teaching and research in brain development in the early years, with the latter shared in a commentary in this Special Edition section of *He Kupu*. Closer to home, Professor Claire McLachlan - guest speaker at the symposium with a presentation on the revised *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Mātauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early Childhood Curriculum (Te Whāriki)* (Ministry of Education [MoE], 2017) - is also featured in the Special Edition section. McLachlan's article contextualises the review of *Te Whāriki* and reflects on the changes in the curriculum in relation to assessment.

In the Practitioner section there are four articles and a commentary. The articles discuss a range of issues from science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education, soft skills to a literature review on gun play.

This section commences with a commentary from Fiona Woodgate who draws upon current literature to explore the origins and application of STEM education. Following on from Fiona's article, Julia Holdom provides some practical advice to teachers on how they can support STEM concepts in their practices. Julia also explores the concept of STEM through the lens of New Zealand's early childhood curriculum - *Te Whāriki* (MoE, 2017). In line with the STEM theme Keshni Kumar and Marjolein Whyte's article gives a practical overview of science in early childhood education, including a discussion on pedagogical practices. Their article also provides some practical ways that teachers can introduce children to science in meaningful and memorable ways.

Moving away from science Binky Laureta's article discusses soft skills and argues for its inclusion in early childhood curriculum. The last article in this section is a literature review on gun play undertaken by Anran Nui.

The Special Theme section contains four articles and a commentary. As noted earlier, the commentary by Bredekamp considers brain development in young children and research on child development with particular reference to the translational research work for teachers and families by The Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. Claire McLachlan's article follows and provides context to the review of *Te Whāriki* through her own experiences as a member of the appointed writing team for the update of *Te Whāriki*. In particular McLachlan emphasises assessment and explores approaches to both 'in the moment' and planned assessment and the usefulness of approaches in enabling teachers to support children's learning as they implement the new curriculum.

The following two papers maintain the *Te Whāriki* direction with Robyn Chaffey exploring how social justice is achieved when an ethical lens is applied to the child at the heart of the curriculum; and considerations by Galina Stebletsova and Barbara Scanlan on how a curriculum can support the health and wellbeing of children.

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The last article in this section by Kim Jenson discusses art media curriculum as a means of fostering children's holistic development while cultivating their artistic abilities and knowledge.

This issue of *He Kupu* concludes with three book reviews: Zhara Hermann has reviewed *Effective Practices in Early Childhood Education: Building a Foundation* by Sue Bredekamp; Chelsea Bracefield provides a review of *Education and New Technologies - Perils and Promises for Learners* edited by Kieron Sheehy and Andrew Holliman; and lastly Barbara Scanlan reviews *Play, Learning and the Early Childhood Curriculum* by Elizabeth Wood.

I hope that you will find the articles in this edition encourage you to reflect on *Children... the heart of curriculum* to inform your practices.

Please note that we invite submissions for our upcoming special edition on *Inclusive early childhood education: Pedagogy and practice* by 26 July 2018. Please check the website for the call for papers.

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